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Vol. 1



LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY









**THE LETTERS OF  
WILLIAM JAMES**









*Wm. James*  
FROM A CRAYON DRAWING BY HIS YOUNGEST SON

# THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM JAMES

EDITED BY HIS SON  
HENRY JAMES

*Limited Edition*

I



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BOSTON

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**276054**

**OF THE LIMITED EDITION OF 600 SETS  
THIS IS NUMBER 30<sup>9</sup>.**

**Y8A2811 0907MAY2**

*To my Mother,  
gallant and devoted ally  
of my Father's most arduous  
and happy years,  
this collection of his letters  
is dedicated.*



## PREFACE

WHETHER William James was compressing his correspondence into brief messages, or allowing it to expand into copious letters, he could not write a page that was not free, animated, and characteristic. Many of his correspondents preserved his letters, and examination of them soon showed that it would be possible to make a selection which should not only contain certain letters that clearly deserved to be published because of their readable quality alone, but should also include letters that were biographical in the best sense. For in the case of a man like James the biographical question to be answered is not, as with a man of affairs: How can his actions be explained? but rather: What manner of being was he? What were his background and education? and, above all, What were his temperament and the bias of his mind? What native instincts, preferences, and limitations of view did he bring with him to his business of reading the riddle of the Universe? His own informal utterances throw the strongest light on such questions.

In these volumes I have attempted to make such a selection. The task has been simplified by the nature of the material, in which the most interesting letters were often found, naturally enough, to include the most vivid elements of which a picture could be composed. I have added such notes as seemed necessary in the interest of clearness; but I have tried to leave the reader to his own conclusions. The work was begun in 1913, but had to be laid aside; and I should regret the delay in completing it even more than I do if it were not that very interesting letters have come to light during the last three years.



James was a great reader of biographies himself, and pointed again and again to the folly of judging a man's ideas by minute logical and textual examinations, without apprehending his mental attitude sympathetically. He was well aware that every man's philosophy is biased by his feelings, and is not due to purely rational processes. He was quite incapable himself of the cool kind of abstraction that comes from indifference about the issue. Life spoke to him in even more ways than to most men, and he responded to its superabundant confusion with passion and insatiable curiosity. His spiritual development was a matter of intense personal experience.

So students of his books may even find that this collection of informal and intimate utterances helps them to understand James as a philosopher and psychologist.

I have not included letters that are wholly technical or polemic. Such documents belong in a study of James's philosophy, or in a history of its origin and influence. However interesting they might be to certain readers, their appropriate place is not here.

A good deal of biographical information about William James, his brother Henry, and their father has already been given to the public; but unfortunately it is scattered, and much of it is cast in a form which calls for interpretation or amendment. The elder Henry James left an autobiographical fragment which was published in a volume of his "Literary Remains," but it was composed purely as a religious record. He wrote it in the third person, as if it were the life of one "Stephen Dewhurst," and did not try to give a circumstantial report of his youth or ancestry. Later, his son Henry wrote two volumes of early reminiscences in his turn. In "A Small Boy and Others" and "Notes of a Son and Brother" he reproduced the atmosphere of a household

of which he was the last survivor, and adumbrated the figures of Henry James, Senior, and of certain other members of his family with infinite subtlety at every turn of the page. But he too wrote without much attention to particular facts or the sequence of events, and his two volumes were incomplete and occasionally inaccurate with respect to such details.

Accordingly I have thought it advisable to restate parts of the family record, even though the restatement involves some repetition.

Finally, I should explain that the letters have been reproduced *verbatim*, though not *literatim*, except for superscriptions, which have often been simplified. As respects spelling and punctuation, the manuscripts are not consistent. James wrote rapidly, used abbreviations, occasionally "simplified" his spelling, and was inclined to use capital letters only for emphasis. Thus he often followed the French custom of writing adjectives derived from proper names with small letters — *e.g.* french literature, european affairs. But when he wrote for publication he was too considerate of his reader's attention to distract it with such petty irregularities; therefore unimportant peculiarities of orthography have generally not been reproduced in this book. On the other hand, the phraseology of the manuscripts, even where grammatically incomplete, has been kept. Verbal changes have not been made except where it was clear that there had been a slip of the pen, and clear what had been intended. It is obvious that rhetorical laxities are to be expected in letters written as these were. No editor who has attempted to "improve away" such defects has ever deserved to be thanked.

Acknowledgments are due, first of all, to the correspondents who have generously supplied letters. Several who

were most generous and to whom I am most indebted have, alas! passed beyond the reach of thanks. I wish particularly to record my gratitude here to correspondents too numerous to be named who have furnished letters that are not included. Such material, though omitted from the book, has been informing and helpful to the Editor. One example may be cited — the copious correspondence with Mrs. James which covers the period of every briefest separation; but extracts<sup>3</sup> from this have been used only when other letters failed. From Dr. Dickinson S. Miller, from Professor R. B. Perry, from my mother, from my brother William, and from my wife, all of whom have seen the material at different stages of its preparation, I have received many helpful suggestions, and I gratefully acknowledge my special debt to them. President Eliot, Dr. Miller, and Professor G. H. Palmer were, each, so kind as to send me memoranda of their impressions and recollections. I have embodied parts of the memoranda of the first two in my notes; and have quoted from Professor Palmer's minute — about to appear in the "Harvard Graduates' Magazine." For all information about William James's Barber ancestry I am indebted to the genealogical investigations of Mrs. Russell Hastings. Special acknowledgments are due to Mr. George B. Ives, who has prepared the topical index.

Finally, I shall be grateful to anyone who will, at any time, advise me of the whereabouts of any letters which I have not already had an opportunity to examine.

H. J.

*August, 1920.*

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## DATES AND FAMILY NAMES

- 1842.        January 11. Born in New York.
- 1857-58.    At School in Boulogne.
- 1859-60.    In Geneva.
- 1860-61.    Studied painting under William M. Hunt in Newport.
- 1861.        Entered the Lawrence Scientific School.
- 1863.        Entered the Harvard Medical School.
- 1865-66.    Assistant under Louis Agassiz on the Amazon.
- 1867-68.    Studied medicine in Germany.
- 1869.        M.D. Harvard.
- 1873-76.    Instructor in Anatomy and Physiology in Harvard College.
- 1875.        Began to give instruction in Psychology.
- 1876.        Assistant Professor of Physiology.
- 1878.        Married. Undertook to write a treatise on Psychology.
- 1880.        Assistant Professor of Philosophy.
- 1882-83.    Spent several months visiting European universities and colleagues.
- 1885.        Professor of Philosophy. (Between 1889 and 1897 his title was Professor of Psychology.)
- 1890.        "Principles of Psychology" appeared.
- 1892-93.    European travel.
- 1897.        Published "The Will to Believe and other Essays on Popular Philosophy."
- 1899.        Published "Talks to Teachers," etc.
- 1899-1902. Broke down in health. Two years in Europe.
- 1901-1902. Gifford Lectures. "The Varieties of Religious Experience."
- 1906.        Acting Professor for half-term at Stanford University. (Interrupted by San Francisco earthquake.)

1906. Lowell Institute lectures, subsequently published as  
"Pragmatism."  
1907. Resigned all active duties at Harvard.  
1908. Hibbert lectures at Manchester College, Oxford;  
subsequently published as "A Pluralistic Universe."  
1910. August 26. Died at Chocorua, N.H.

(See Appendix in volume II for a full list of books by William James, with their dates.)

William James was the eldest of five children. His brothers and sister, with their dates, were: Henry (referred to as "Harry"), 1843-1916; Garth Wilkinson (referred to as "Wilky"), 1845-1883; Robertson (referred to as "Bob" and "Bobby"), 1846-1910; Alice, 1848-1892.

He had five children. Their dates and the names by which they are referred to in the letters are: Henry ("Harry"), 1879; William ("Billy"), 1882; Hermann, 1884-1885; Margaret Mary ("Peggy," "Peg"), 1887; Alexander Robertson ("Tweedie," "François"), 1890.

**THE LETTERS OF  
WILLIAM JAMES**



# THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM JAMES

## I

### INTRODUCTION

*Ancestry—Henry James, Senior—Youth—Education—  
Certain Personal Traits*

THE ancestors of William James, with the possible exception of one pair of great-great-grandparents, all came to America from Scotland or Ireland during the eighteenth century, and settled in the eastern part of New York State or in New Jersey. One Irish forefather is known to have been descended from Englishmen who had crossed the Irish Channel in the time of William of Orange, or thereabouts; but whether the others who came from Ireland were more English or Celtic is not clear. In America all his ancestors were Protestant, and they appear, without exception, to have been people of education and character. In the several communities in which they settled they prospered above the average. They became farmers, traders, and merchants, and, so far as has yet been discovered, there were only two lawyers, and no doctors or ministers, among them. They seem to have been reckoned as pious people, and several of their number are known to have been generous supporters of the churches in which they worshiped; but, if one may judge by the scanty records which remain, there

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## LETTERS OF WILLIAM JAMES

is no one among them to whom one can point as foreshadowing the inclination to letters and religious speculation that manifested itself strongly in William James and his father. They were mainly concerned to establish themselves in a new country. Inasmuch as they succeeded, lived well, and were respected, it is likely that they possessed a fair endowment of both the imagination and the solid qualities that one thinks of as appropriately combined in the colonists who crossed the ocean in the eighteenth century and did well in the new country. But, as to many of them, it is impossible to do more than presume this, and impossible to carry presumption any farther.

The last ancestor to arrive in America was William James's paternal grandfather. This grandfather, whose name was also William James, came from Bally-James-Duff, County Cavan, in the year 1789. He was then eighteen years old. He may have left home because his family tried to force him into the ministry,—for there is a story to that effect,—or he may have had more adventurous reasons. But in any case he arrived in a manner which tradition has cherished as wholly becoming to a first American ancestor — with a very small sum of money, a Latin grammar in which he had already made some progress at home, and a desire to visit the field of one of the revolutionary battles. He promptly disposed of his money in making this visit. Then, finding himself penniless in Albany, he took employment as clerk in a store. He worked his way up rapidly; traded on his own account, kept a store, traveled and bought land to the westward, engaged as time went on in many enterprises, among them being the salt industry of Syracuse (where the principal residential street bears his name), prospered exceedingly, and amassed a fortune so large, that after his death it provided a liberal

independence for his widow and each of his eleven children. The imagination and sagacity which enabled him to do this inevitably involved him in the public affairs of the community in which he lived, although he seems never to have held political office. Thus his name appears early in the history of the Erie Canal project; and, when that great undertaking was completed and the opening of the waterway was celebrated in 1823, he delivered the "oration" of the day at Albany. It may be found in Munsell's Albany Collections, and considering what were the fashions of the time in such matters, ought to be esteemed by a modern reader for containing more sense and information than "oratory." He was one of the organizers and the first Vice-President of the Albany Savings Bank, founded in 1820, and of the Albany Chamber of Commerce,— the President, in both instances, being Stephen Van Rensselaer. When he died, in 1832, the New York "Evening Post" said of him: "He has done more to build up the city [of Albany] than any other individual."

Two portraits of the first William James have survived, and present him as a man of medium height, rather portly, clean-shaven, hearty, friendly, confident, and distinctly Irish.

Unrecorded anecdotes about him are not to be taken literally, but may be presumed to be indicative. It is told of him, for instance, that one afternoon shortly after he had married for the third time, he saw a lady coming up the steps of his house, rose from the table at which he was absorbed in work, went to the door and said "he was sorry Mrs. James was not in." But the poor lady was herself his newly married wife, and cried out to him not to be "so absent-minded." He discovered one day that a man with whom he had gone into partnership was cheating, and immediately seized him by the collar and marched him through

the streets to a justice. "When old Billy James came to Syracuse," said a citizen who could remember his visits, "things went as *he* wished."

In his comfortable brick residence on North Pearl Street he kept open house and gave a special welcome to members of the Presbyterian ministry. One of his sons said of him: "He was certainly a very easy parent — weakly, nay painfully sensitive to his children's claims upon his sympathy." "The law of the house, within the limits of religious decency, was freedom itself."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, there appears to have been only one matter in which he was rigorous with his family: his Presbyterianism was of the stiffest kind, and in his old age he sacrificed even his affections for what he considered the true faith. Theological differences estranged him from two of his sons, — William and Henry, — and though the old man became reconciled to one of them a few days before his death, he left a will which would have cut them both off with small annuities if its elaborate provisions had been sustained by the Court.

In 1803 William James married (his third wife) Catherine Barber,<sup>2</sup> a daughter of John Barber, of Montgomery, Orange County, New York. The Barbers had been active people in the affairs of their day. Catherine's grandfather had been a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and her father

<sup>1</sup> *Literary Remains of Henry James*, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Henry James (in *A Small Boy and Others*, p. 5) says of Catherine Barber; "She represented for us in our generation the only English blood — that of both her own parents — flowing in our veins." She may well have seemed to her grandson to be of a different type from other members of the family, who were more recently, and doubtless obviously, Irish or Scotch; but the statement is incorrect. John Barber was the son of Patrick Barber, who came from Longford County, Ireland, about 1750 and settled at Neelytown near Newburgh (after having lived in New York City and Princeton) about 1764, and of Jannet Rhea (or Rea) whose parents were well-to-do people in old Shawangunk in 1790. Whatever may have been the previous history of the Rhea family, their name does not suggest an English origin. Both Patrick Barber and Matthew Rhea were pillars of Goodwill Presbyterian Church in Montgomery.

and her two uncles were all officers in the Revolutionary Army. One of the uncles, Francis Barber, had previously graduated from Princeton and had conducted a boarding-school for boys at "Elizabethtown," New Jersey, at which Alexander Hamilton prepared for college. During the war he rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, was detailed by Washington to be one of Steuben's four aides, and performed other staff-duties. John, Catherine's father, returned to Montgomery after the Revolution, was one of the founders of Montgomery Academy, an associate judge of the County Court, a member of the state legislature, and a church elder for fifty years. In Henry James, Senior's, reminiscences there is a passage which describes him as an old man, much addicted to the reading of military history, and which contrasts his stoicism with his wife's warm and spontaneous temperament and her exceptional gift of interesting her grandchildren in conversation.<sup>1</sup>

In the same reminiscences Catherine Barber herself is described as having been "a good wife and mother, nothing else — save, to be sure, a kindly friend and neighbor" and "the most democratic person by temperament I ever knew."<sup>2</sup> She adopted the three children of her husband's prior marriages and, by their own account, treated them no differently

<sup>1</sup> See *Literary Remains*, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> If the reader were familiar, as he cannot be presumed to have been, with the elder Henry James or his writings, he would be in no danger of finding anything cold or qualifying in these words, but would discern a true adoration expressing itself in a way that was peculiarly characteristic of their writer. For Henry James, Senior, a spiritual democracy deeper than that of our political jargon was not a mere conception: it was an unquestioned reality. The outer wrappings in which people swathed their souls excited him to anger and ridicule more often than praise; but when men or women seemed to him beautiful or adorable he thought it was because they betrayed more naturally than others the inward possession of that humble "social" spirit which he wanted to think of as truly a common possession — God's equal gift to each and all. To say of his mother that *that* could be felt in her, that she was *merely* that, was his purest praise. The reader may find this habit of his thought expressing itself anew in William James by turning to a letter on page 210 below. That letter might have been written by Henry James, Senior.

from the five sons and three daughters whom she herself bore and brought up. She managed her husband's large house during his lifetime, and for twenty-seven years after his death kept it open as a home for children, and grandchildren, and cousins as well. This "dear gentle lady of many cares" must have been a woman of sound judgment in addition to being an embodiment of kindness and generosity in all things; for admiration as well as affection and gratitude still attend her memory after the lapse of sixty years.

The next generation, eleven in number as has already been said,<sup>1</sup> may well have given their widowed mother "many cares." It had been the purpose of the first William James to provide that his children (several of whom were under age when he died) should qualify themselves by industry and experience to enjoy the large patrimony which he expected to bequeath to them, and with that in view he left a will which was a voluminous compound of restraints and instructions. He showed thereby how great were both his confidence in his own judgment and his solicitude for the moral welfare of his descendants. But he accomplished nothing more, for the courts declared the will to be invalid; and his children became financially independent as fast as they came of age. Most of them were blessed with a liberal allowance of that combination of gayety, volubility, and waywardness which is popularly conceded to the Irish; but these qualities, which made them "charming" and "interesting" to their contemporaries, did not keep them from dissipating both respectable talents and unusual opportunities. Two of the men — William, namely, who became an eccentric but highly respected figure in the Presbyterian ministry, and Henry of whom more will be said

<sup>1</sup> The places of two of the eleven who died early were taken by their orphaned children.

shortly — possessed an ardor of intellect that neither disaster nor good fortune could corrupt. But on the whole the personalities and histories of that generation were such as to have impressed the boyish mind of the writer of the following letters and of his younger brother like a richly colored social kaleidoscope, dashed, as the patterns changed and disintegrated, with amusing flashes of light and occasional dark moments of tragedy. After they were all dead and gone, the memory of them certainly prompted the author of "The Wings of a Dove" when he described Minny Theale's New York forebears as "an extravagant, unregulated cluster, with free-living ancestors, handsome dead cousins, lurid uncles, beautiful vanished aunts, persons all busts and curls," to have known whom and to have belonged to whom "was to have had one's small world-space both crowded and enlarged."

It is unnecessary, however, to pause over any but one member of that generation.

Henry James, the second son of William and Catherine, was born in 1811. He was apparently a boy of unusual activity and animal spirits, but at the age of thirteen he met with an accident which maimed him for life. He was, at the time, a schoolboy at the Albany Academy, and one of his fellow students, Mr. Woolsey Rogers Hopkins, wrote the following account of what happened. (The Professor Henry referred to was Joseph Henry, later the head of the Smithsonian Institute.)

"On a summer afternoon, the older students would meet Professor Henry in the Park, in front of the Academy, where amusements and instruction would be given in balloon-flying, the motive power being heated air supplied from a tow ball saturated with spirits of turpentine. When one

of these air-ships took fire, the ball would be dropt for the boys, when it was kicked here and there, a roll of fire. [One day when] young James had a sprinkling of this [turpentine] on his pantaloons, one of these balls was sent into the open window of Mrs. Gilchrist's stable. [James], thinking only of conflagration, rushed to the hayloft and stamped out the flame, but burned his leg."

The boy was confined to his bed for the next two years, and one leg was twice amputated above the knee. He was robust enough to survive this long and dire experience of the surgery of the eighteen-twenties, and to establish right relations with the world again; but thereafter he could live conveniently only in towns where smooth footways and ample facilities for transportation were to be had.

In 1830 he graduated from Union College, Schenectady, and in 1835 entered the Princeton Theological Seminary with the class of '39. By the time he had completed two years of his Seminary course, his discontent with the orthodox dispensation was no longer to be doubted. He left Princeton, and the truth seems to be that he had already conceived some measure of the antipathy to all ecclesiasticisms which he expressed with abounding scorn and irony throughout all his later years.

In 1840 he married Mary Walsh, the sister of a fellow student at Princeton, who had shared his religious doubts and had, with him, turned his back on the ministry and left the Seminary. She was the daughter of James and Mary (Robertson) Walsh of New York City, and was thus descended from Hugh Walsh, an Irishman of English extraction who came from Killingsley,<sup>1</sup> County Down, in 1764, and settled himself finally near Newburgh, and from Alex-

<sup>1</sup> According to the Rev. Hugh Walsh of Newburgh, who has worked out the Walsh genealogy. *A Small Boy and Others* (page 6) says "Killyleagh."



Henry James, Sr., and his Wife.





ander Robertson, a Scotchman who came to America not long before the Revolution and whose name is borne by the school of the Scotch Presbyterian Church in New York City. Mary Walsh was a gentle lady, who accommodated her life to all her husband's vagaries and presided with cheerful indulgence over the development of her five children's divergent and uncompromising personalities. She lived entirely for her husband and children, and they, joking her and teasing her and adoring her, were devoted to her in return. Several contemporaries left accounts of their impressions of her husband without saying much about her; and this was natural, for she was not self-assertive and was inevitably eclipsed by his richly interesting presence. But it is all the more unfortunate that her son Henry, who might have done justice, as no one else could, to her good sense and to the grace of her mind and character, could not bring himself to include an adequate account of her in the "Small Boy and Others." To a reader who ventured to regret the omission, he replied sadly, "Oh! my dear Boy — that memory is too sacred!" William James spoke of her very seldom after her death, but then always with a sort of tender reverence that he vouchsafed to no one else. She supplied an element of serenity and discretion to the councils of the family of which they were often in need; and it would not be a mistake to look to her in trying to account for the unusual receptivity of mind and æsthetic sensibility that marked her two elder sons.

During the three or four years that followed his marriage Henry James, Senior, appears to have spent his time in Albany and New York. In the latter city, in the old, or then new, Astor House, his eldest son was born on the eleventh of January, 1842. He named the boy William, and a few days later brought his friend R. W. Emerson to

admire and give his blessing to the little philosopher-to-be.<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterwards the family moved into a house at No. 2 Washington Place, and there, on April 15, 1843, the second son, Henry, came into the world. There was thus a difference of fifteen months in the ages of William and the younger brother, who was also to become famous and who figures largely in the correspondence that follows.

William James derived so much from his father and resembled him so strikingly in many ways that it is worth while to dwell a little longer on the character, manners, and beliefs of the elder Henry James. He was not only an impressive and all-pervading presence in the early lives of his children, but always continued to be for them the most vivid and interesting personality who had crossed the horizon of their experience. He was their constant companion, and entered into their interests and poured out his own ideas and emotions before them in a way that would not have been possible to a nature less spontaneous and affectionate.

His books, written in a style which "to its great dignity of cadence and full and homely vocabulary, united a sort of inward palpitating human quality, gracious and tender, precise, fierce, scornful, humorous by turns, recalling the rich vascular temperament of the old English masters rather than that of an American of today,"<sup>2</sup> reveal him richly to anyone who has a taste for theological reading. His philosophy is summarized in the introduction to "The Literary Remains," and his own personality and the very atmosphere of his household are reproduced in "A Small Boy and Others," and "Notes of a Son and Brother." Thus what it is appropriate to say about him in this place

<sup>1</sup> *A Small Boy and Others*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Literary Remains of Henry James*, Introduction, p. 9.

can be given largely in either his own words or those of one or the other of his two elder sons.

The intellectual quandary in which Henry James, Senior, found himself in early manhood was well described in letters to Emerson in 1842 and 1843. "Here I am," he wrote, "these thirty-two years in life, ignorant in all outward science, but having patient habits of meditation, which never know disgust or weariness, and feeling a force of impulsive love toward all humanity which will not let me rest wholly mute, a force which grows against all resistance that I can muster against it. What shall I do? Shall I get me a little nook in the country and communicate with my *living* kind — not my talking kind — by life only; a word perhaps of that communication, a fit word once a year? Or shall I follow some commoner method — learn science and bring myself first into man's respect, that I may thus the better speak to him? I confess this last theory seems rank with earthliness — to belong to days forever past. . . . I am led, quite without any conscious wilfulness either, to seek the *laws* of these appearances that swim round us in God's great museum — to get hold of some central *facts* which may make all other facts properly circumferential, and *orderly* so — and you continually dishearten me by your apparent indifference to such law and central facts, by the dishonor you seem to cast on our intelligence, as if it stood much in our way. Now my conviction is that my intelligence is the necessary digestive apparatus for my life; that there is *nihil in vita* — worth anything, that is — *quod non prius in intellectu*. . . . Oh, you man without a handle! Shall one never be able to help himself out of you, according to his needs, and be dependent only upon your fitful tippings-up?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, further, *Notes of a Son and Brother*, pp. 181 et seq.

To a modern ear these words confess not only the mental isolation and bewilderment of their author, but also the rarity of the atmosphere in which his philosophic impulse was struggling to draw breath. Like many other struggling spirits of his time, he fell into a void between two epochs. He was a theologian too late to repose on the dogmas and beliefs that were accepted by the preceding generation and by the less critical multitude of his own contemporaries. He was, in youth, a skeptic — too early to avail himself of the methods, discoveries, and perspectives which a generation of scientific inquiry conferred upon his children. The situation was one which usually resolved itself either into permanent skepticism or a more or less unreasoning conformity. In the case of Henry James there happened ere long one of those typical spiritual crises in which “man’s original optimism and self-satisfaction get leveled with the dust.”<sup>1</sup>

While he was still struggling out of his melancholy state a friend introduced him to the works of Swedenborg. By their help he found the relief he needed, and a faith that possessed him ever after with the intensity of revelation.

“The world of his thought had a few elements and no others ever troubled him. Those elements were very deep ones and had theological names.” So wrote his son after he had died.<sup>2</sup> He never achieved a truly philosophic formulation of his religious position, and Mr. Howells once complained that he had written a book about the “Secret of Swedenborg” and had *kept it*. He concerned himself with but one question, conveyed but one message; and the only business of his later life was the formulation and

<sup>1</sup>*Society of the Redeemed Form of Man*, quoted in the Introduction to *Literary Remains*, p. 57, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup>Letter to Shadworth H. Hodgson, p. 241 *infra*.

serene reutterance, in books, occasional lectures, and personal correspondence, of his own conception of God and of man's proper relation to him. "The usual problem is — given the creation to find the Creator. To Mr. James it [was] — given the Creator to find the creation. God is; of His being there is no doubt; but who and what are we?" So said a critic quoted in the Introduction to the "Literary Remains," and William James's own estimate may be quoted from the same place (page 12). "I have often," he wrote "tried to imagine what sort of <sup>a</sup>figure my father might have made, had he been born in a genuinely theological age, with the best minds about him fermenting with the mystery of the Divinity, and the air full of definitions and theories and counter-theories, and strenuous reasoning and contentions, about God's relation to mankind. Floated on such a congenial tide, furthered by sympathetic comrades, and opposed no longer by blank silence but by passionate and definite resistance, he would infallibly have developed his resources in many ways which, as it was, he never tried; and he would have played a prominent, perhaps a momentous and critical, part in the struggles of his time, for he was a religious prophet and genius, if ever prophet and genius there were. He published an intensely positive, radical, and fresh conception of God, and an intensely vital view of our connection with him. And nothing shows better the altogether lifeless and unintellectual character of the professional theism of our time, than the fact that this view, this conception, so vigorously thrown down, should not have stirred the faintest tremulation on its stagnant pool."

The reader will readily infer that there was nothing conventional, prim, or parson-like about this man. The fact is that the devoutly religious mind is often quite anarchic

in its disregard of all those worldly institutions and conventions which do not express human dependence on the Creator. Henry James, Senior, dealt with such things in the most allusive and paradoxical terms. "I would rather," he once ejaculated, "have a son of mine corroded with all the sins of the Decalogue than have him perfect!" His prime horror, writes Henry James, was of prigs; "he only cared for virtue that was more or less ashamed of itself; and nothing could have been of a happier whimsicality than the mixture in him, and in all his walk and conversation, of the strongest instinct for the human and the liveliest reaction from the literal. The literal played in our education as small a part as it perhaps ever played in any, and we wholesomely breathed inconsistency and ate and drank contradictions. . . . The moral of all was that we need never fear not to be good enough if we were only social enough; a splendid meaning indeed being attached to the latter term. Thus we had ever the amusement, since I can really call it nothing less, of hearing morality, or moralism, as it was more invidiously worded, made hay of in the very interest of character and conduct; these things suffering much, it seemed, by their association with conscience — the very home of the literal, the haunt of so many pedantries."<sup>1</sup>

The erroneous statement that has become current, and that describes Henry James, Senior, as a Swedenborgian minister, is a rich absurdity to anyone who knew him or his writings. Not only had the churches in general sold themselves to the devil, in his view, but the arch-sinners in this respect were the Swedenborgian congregations, for they, if any, might be expected to know better. A letter which he wrote to the editor of the "New Jerusalem Messenger,"

<sup>1</sup> *A Small Boy and Others*, p. 216.

in 1863, illustrates this and tells more about him than could ten pages of description:

DEAR SIR,— You were good enough, when I called on you at Mr. Appleton's request in New York, to say among other friendly things that you would send me your paper; and I have regularly received it ever since. I thank you for your kindness, but my conscience refuses any longer to sanction its taxation in this way, as I have never been able to read the paper with any pleasure, nor therefore of course with any profit. I presume its editorials are by you, and while I willingly seized upon every evidence they display of an enlarged spirit, I yet find the general drift of the paper so very poverty-stricken in a spiritual regard, as to make it absolutely the least nutritive reading I know. The old sects are notoriously bad enough, but your sect compares with these very much as a heap of dried cod on Long Wharf in Boston compares with the same fish while still enjoying the freedom of the Atlantic Ocean. I remember well the manly strain of your conversation with me in New York, and I know therefore how you must suffer from the control of persons so unworthy as those who have the property of your paper. Why don't you cut the whole concern at once, as a rank offence to every human hope and aspiration? The intercourse I had some years since with the leaders of the sect, on a visit to Boston, made me fully aware of their deplorable want of manhood; but judging from your paper, the whole sect seems spiritually benumbed. Your mature men have an air of childishness and your young men have the aspect of old women. I find it hard above all to imagine the existence of a living woman in the bounds of your sect, whose breasts flow with milk instead of hardening with pedantry. I know such



things are of course, but I tell you frankly that these are the sort of questions your paper forces on the unsophisticated mind. I really know nothing so sad and spectral in the shape of literature. It seems composed by skeletons and intended for readers who are content to disown their good flesh and blood, and be moved by some ghastly mechanism. It cannot but prove very unwholesome to you spiritually, to be so nearly connected with all that sadness and silence, where nothing more musical is heard than the occasional jostling of bone by bone. Do come out of it before you wither as an autumn leaf, which no longer rustles in full-veined life on the pliant bough, but rattles instead with emptiness upon the frozen melancholy earth.

Pardon my freedom; I was impressed by your friendliness towards me, and speak to you therefore in return with all the frankness of friendship.

Consider me as having any manner and measure of disrespect for your ecclesiastical pretensions, but as being personally, yours cordially,

H. JAMES.<sup>1</sup>

A diary entry made by his daughter Alice has fortunately been preserved. "A week before Father died," says this entry, "I asked him one day whether he had thought what he should like to have done about his funeral. He was immediately very much interested, not having apparently thought of it before; he reflected for some time, and then said with the greatest solemnity and looking so majestic: 'Tell him to say only this: "Here lies a man, who has thought all his life that the ceremonies attending birth, marriage and death were all damned non-sense." Don't let him say a word more!'"

Henry James, Senior, lived entirely with his books, his

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also a passage in the *Literary Remains*, at p. 104.

pen, his family, and his friends. The first three he could carry about with him, and did carry along on numerous restless and extended journeys. From friends, even when he left them on the opposite side of the ocean, he was never quite separated, for he always maintained a wide correspondence, partly theological, partly playful and friendly. He was so sociable and so independent and lively a talker, that he entered into hearty relations with interesting people wherever he went. Thackeray was a familiar visitor at his apartment in Paris when his older children were just old enough to remember, and his recollections of Carlyle and Emerson will reward any reader whose appetite does not carry him as far as the theological disquisitions. "I suppose there was not in his day," said E. L. Godkin, "a more formidable master of English style."<sup>1</sup> In his conversation the winning impulsiveness of both his humor and his indignation appeared more clearly even than in his writing. He loved to talk, not for the sake of oppressing his hearer by an exposition of his own views, but in order to stir him up and rouse him to discussion and rejoinder. At home he was not above espousing the queerest of opinions, if by so doing he could excite his children to gallop after him and ride him down. "Meal-times in that pleasant home were exciting. 'The adipose and affectionate Wilky,' as his father called him, would say something and be instantly corrected or disputed by the little cock-sparrow Bob, the youngest, but good-naturedly defend his statement, and then Henry (Junior) would emerge from his silence in defence of Wilky. Then Bob would be more impertinently insistent, and Mr. James would advance as Moderator, and William, the eldest, join in. The voice of the Moderator presently would be drowned by the combatants and he

<sup>1</sup> *Life of E. L. Godkin*, vol. II, p. 218. New York, 1907.

soon came down vigorously into the arena, and when, in the excited argument, the dinner-knives might not be absent from eagerly gesticulating hands, dear Mrs. James, more conventional, but bright as well as motherly, would look at me, laughingly reassuring, saying, 'Don't be disturbed; they won't stab each other. This is usual when the boys come home.' And the quiet little sister ate her dinner, smiling, close to the combatants. Mr. James considered this debate, within bounds, excellent for the boys. In their speech singularly mature and picturesque, as well as vehement, the Gaelic (Irish) element in their descent always showed. Even if they blundered, they saved themselves by wit."<sup>1</sup> It was certainly to their father's talk, to the influence of his "full and homely" idiom, and to the attention-arresting whimsicality and humor with which he perverted the whole vocabulary of theology and philosophy, that both William and Henry owed much of their own wealth of resource in ordinary speech. They used often to exaggerate their father's tricks of utterance, for he would have been the last man to refuse himself as a whetstone for his children's wit, and the business of outdoing the head of the family in the matter of language was an exercise familiar to all his sons.<sup>2</sup> Whoever knew them will remember that their everyday diction displayed a natural command of such

<sup>1</sup> *Early Years of the Saturday Club*; E. W. Emerson's chapter on Henry James, Senior, p. 328. There follows a delightful account of a "Conversation" at R. W. Emerson's house in Concord, at which Henry James, Senior, upset a prepared discourse of Alcott's and launched himself into an attack on "Morality." Whereupon Miss Mary Moody Emerson, "eighty-four years old and dressed underneath without doubt, in her shroud," seized him by the shoulders and shook him and rebuked him. "Mr. James beamed with delight and spoke with most chivalrous courtesy to this Deborah bending over him."

<sup>2</sup> Some passages in William James's early letters to his family might seem labored. They should be read with this in mind. An especially high-sounding phrase or a flight into a grand style was understood as a signal meaning "fun," and such passages are never to be taken as serious.

words and figures as most men cannot use gracefully except when composing with pen in hand.

Finally, with respect to the constancy of Henry James, Senior's, presence in the lives of his children, it should be made clear that he never had any "business" or profession to interfere with "his almost eccentrically home-loving habit." During the years of moving about Europe, during the quiet years in Newport, the family was thrown upon its inner social resources. The children were constantly with their parents and with each other, and they continued all their lives to be united by much stronger attachments than usually exist between members of one family.

William James never acknowledged himself as feeling particularly indebted to any of the numerous schools and tutors to whom his father's oscillations between New York, Europe, and Newport confided him. He was sent first to private schools in New York City; but they seem to have been considered inadequate to his needs, for he was not allowed to remain long in any one. Nor were the changes any less frequent after the family moved to Europe (for the second time since his birth) in 1855. He was then thirteen years old. The exact sequence of events during the next five years of restless movement cannot be determined now, but the important points are clear. The family, including by this time three younger brothers and a younger sister as well as a devoted maternal aunt, remained abroad from 1855 to 1858. London, Paris, Boulogne-sur-Mer, and Geneva harbored them for differing periods. In London and Paris governesses, tutors, and a private school of the sort that admits the irregularly educated children of strangers visiting the Continent, administered what must have been a completely discontinuous instruc-

tion. In Boulogne, William and his younger brother Henry attended the *Collège* through the winter of 1857-58. This term at the *Collège de Boulogne*, during which he passed his sixteenth birthday, was his earliest experience of thorough teaching, and he once said that it gave him his first conception of earnest work. Then, after a year at Newport, there was another European migration — this time to Geneva for the winter of 1859-60. There William was entered at the "Academy," as the present University was still called. He subsequently described himself as having reached Geneva "a miserable, home-bred, obscure little ignoramus." During the following summer he was sent for a while to Bonn-am-Rhein, to learn German. Some Latin, mathematics to the extent of the usual school algebra and trigonometry, a smattering of German and an excellent familiarity with French — such, in conventional terms, was the net result of his education in 1859. He tried to make up for the deficiencies in his schooling, and as occasion offered he picked up a few words of Greek, attained to a moderate reading knowledge of Italian, and a quite complete command of German. But these came later.

He seldom referred to his schooling with anything but contempt, and usually dismissed all reference to it by saying that he "never had any." But, as is often the case with even those boys who follow a regular curriculum, his amusements and excursions beyond the bounds of his prescribed studies did more to develop him appropriately than did any of his schoolmasters. An interest in exact knowledge showed itself early. He once recalled a trivial incident which illustrates this, though he apparently remembered it because he realized, young as he was when it occurred, that it grew out of a real difference between the cast of his mind and the cast of Henry's. As readers of the "Small Boy"



William James at eighteen.  
*From a Daguerreotype.*



will remember, Henry, at the ordinarily "tough" age of ten, was already animated by a secret passion for authorship, and used to confide his literary efforts to folio sheets, which he stored in a copy-book and which he tried to conceal from his tormenting brother. But William came upon them, and discovered that on one page Henry had made a drawing to represent a mother and child clinging to a rock in the midst of a stormy ocean and that he had inscribed under it: "The thunder roared and the lightning followed!" William saw the meteorological blunder immediately; he fairly pounced upon it, and he tormented the sensitive romancer about it so unmercifully that the occasion had to be marked by punishments and the inauguration of a maternal protectorate over the copy-book. About four years later, when he was fifteen years old, his father bought a microscope to give him at Christmas. William happened upon the bill for it in advance, and was hardly able to contain his excitement until Christmas day, so portentous seemed the impending event. Apparently no similar experience ever equalled the intensity of this one. He doubtless made as good use of the instrument as an unguided boy could. But though his proclivities were generously indulged, they were never trained. At Geneva he began to study anatomy, but there was no regular instruction in osteology; so he borrowed a copy of Sappey's "Anatomie" and got permission to visit the Museum and there examine the human skeleton by himself.

Clearly, there was profit for him also in the restlessness which governed his father's movements and which threw the boy into quickening collision with places, people, and ideas at a rate at which such contacts are not vouchsafed to many schoolboys. From so far back as his nineteenth year (there is no evidence to go by before that) William was



blessed with an effortless and confirmed cosmopolitanism of consciousness; and he had attained to an acquaintance with English and French reviews, books, paintings, and public affairs which was remarkable not only for its happy ease, but, in one so young, for its wide range. The letters which follow show clearly with what expert observation he responded, all his life, to changes of scene and to the differences between peoples and environments. The fascination of these differences never failed for him when he traveled, and his letters from abroad give such voluminous proof of his own addiction to what he somewhat harshly called "the most barren of exercises, the making of international comparisons," that the problem of the editor is to control rather than to emphasize the evidence. He began young to be a wide reader; soon he became a wide reader in three languages. Above all, he was encouraged early to trust his own impulse and pursue his own bent. Probably his active and inquiring intelligence could not have been permanently cribbed and confined by any schooling, no matter how narrow and rigorous. But, as nothing was to be more remarkable about him in his maturity than the easy assurance with which he passed from one field of inquiry to another, ignoring conventional bounds and precincts, never losing his freshness of tone, shedding new light and encouragement everywhere, so it is impossible not to believe that the influences and circumstances which combined in his youth fostered and corroborated his native mobility and detachment of mind.

Meanwhile he had one occupation to which no reference has yet been made, but to which he thought, for a while, of devoting himself wholly, namely, painting. He began to draw before he had reached his 'teens. Henry James said: "As I catch W. J.'s image, from far back, at its most charac-

teristic, he sits drawing and drawing, always drawing, especially under the lamp-light of the Fourteenth Street back parlor; and not as with a plodding patience, which I think would less have affected me, but easily, freely, and, as who should say, infallibly: always at the stage of finishing off, his head dropped from side to side and his tongue rubbing his lower lip. I recover a period during which to see him at all was so to see him — the other flights and faculties removed him from my view.”<sup>1</sup> What was an idle amusement in New York became, when the boy was transferred to foreign places and cut off from other amusements, a sharpener of observation and a resource for otherwise vacant hours. For when the family of young Americans reached St. John’s Wood, London, and then moved to the Continent, the two elder boys found little to do at first except to wander about “in a state of the direst propriety,” staring at street scenes, shop-windows, and such “sights” as they were old enough to enjoy, and then to buy “water-colors and brushes with which to bedaub eternal drawing blocks.” In Paris William had better lessons in drawing than he had ever had elsewhere, and it seems fair to say that he made good use of his opportunity to educate his eye; saw good pictures; sketched and copied with zest; and began to show great aptitude in his own “daubings.” From Bonn, later still, he wrote to his Genevese fellow student Charles Ritter: “Je me suis pleinement décidé à essayer le métier de peintre. En un an ou deux je saurais si j’y suis propre ou non. Si c’est non, il sera facile de reculer. Il n’y a pas sur la terre un objet plus déplorable qu’un méchant artiste.”<sup>2</sup>

He applied himself with energy to art for the following

<sup>1</sup> *A Small Boy and Others*, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> “I have fully decided to try being a painter. I shall know in a year or two whether I am made to be one. If not, it will be easy to retreat. There’s nothing in the world so despicable as a bad artist.” (1860.)

year at Newport, working daily in the studio of William Hunt, along with his stimulating young friend, John La Farge. To what good purpose he had drawn and painted from boyhood, and to what point he trained his gift that winter, cannot now be measured and defined in words. Paper and canvas are the proof of such things, which must be seen rather than described; and unfortunately only one canvas and very few drawings have been preserved. In the "Notes of a Son and Brother," several random sketches are reproduced which will say much to the discerning critic. The one canvas that at all indicates the climax of his artistic effort, the beautiful and simple portrait of his cousin Katharine Temple, is also reproduced in the "Notes"; but a small half-tone gives, alas! only an inadequate impression of the quality of the painting. The sketches which are included in the following pages will give an idea of the felicity of his hand, and of his talent for seeing the living line whenever he made sketches or notes from life. He threw these scraps off so easily, valuing them not at all, that few were kept. Then, before a year had passed (that is to say, in 1861), he had decided not to be a painter after all. Thereafter what was remarkable was just that he let so genuine a talent remain completely neglected. Except to record an observation in the laboratory, to explain the object under discussion to a student, or to amuse his children, he soon left pencil and brush quite untouched.

The photographs of James reproduced in this book are all excellent "likenesses," and one, with his colleague, Royce, caught an attitude which suggests the alertness that marked his bearing. He was of medium height (about five feet eight and one-half inches), and though he was muscular and compact, his frame was slight and he appeared to be slender

in youth, spare in his last years. His carriage was erect and his tread was firm to the end. Until he was over fifty he used to take the stairs of his own house two, or even three, steps at a bound. He moved rapidly, not to say impatiently, but with an assurance that invested his figure with an informal sort of dignity. After he strained his heart in the Adirondacks in 1899 he had to habituate himself to a moderate pace in walking, but he never learned to make short movements and movements of unpremeditated response in a deliberate way. When he drove about the hilly roads of the Adirondacks or New Hampshire, he was forever springing in and out of the carriage to ease the horses where the way was steep. (Indeed it was so intolerable to him to sit in a carriage while straining beasts pulled it up grade, that he lost much of his enjoyment of driving when he could no longer walk up the hills.) Great was his brother Henry's astonishment at Chocorua, in 1904, to see that he still got out of a "democrat wagon" by springing lightly from the top of the wheel. His doctors had cautioned him against such sudden exertions; but he usually jumped without thinking.

In talking he gesticulated very little, but his face and voice were unusually expressive. His eyes were of that not very dark shade whose depth and color changes with alterations of mood. Mrs. Henry Whitman, who knew him well and painted his portrait, called them "irascible blue eyes." He talked in a voice that was low-pitched rather than deep — an unforgettably agreeable voice, that was admirable for conversation or a small lecture-room, although in a very large hall it vibrated and lacked resonance. His speech was full of earnest, humorous and tender cadences.

James was always as informal in his dress as the occasion permitted. The Norfolk jacket in which he used to lecture

to his classes invariably figured in college caricatures — as did also his festive neckties. But there was nothing that disgusted him more than a “loutish” carelessness about appearances. A friend of old days, describing a first meeting with him in the late sixties ejaculated, “He was the *cleanest*-looking chap!” There seemed to be no flabby or unvitalized fibre in him.

People and conversation excited him — if too many, or too long-continued, to the point of irritation and exhaustion. If, as was sometimes the case, he was moody and silent in a small company, it was a sign that he was overworked and tired out. But when he was roused to vivacity and floated on the current of congenial discussion, his enunciation was rapid, with occasional pauses while he searched for the right word or figure and pursed his lips as though helping the word to come. Then he talked spontaneously, humorously, and often extravagantly, just as he will appear to have written to his correspondents. Sometimes he was vehement, but never ponderous; and he never made anyone, no matter how humble, feel that he was trying to “impress.” Men and women of all sorts felt at ease with him, and anybody who, in Touchstone’s phrase,<sup>1</sup> had any philosophy in him, was soon expounding his private hopes, faiths, and skepticisms to James with gusto. He was, distinctly, not a man who required a submissive audience to put him in the vein. A kind of admiring attention that made him self-conscious was as certain to reduce him to silence as a manly give and take was sure to bring him out. It never seemed to occur to him to debate or talk for victory. In Faculty meetings he spoke seldom, and he spent very little time on his feet — except as called upon — when professional congresses or conferences were thrown open to dis-

<sup>1</sup> For James’s use of Touchstone’s question, see p. 190 *infra*.

cussion. Similarly, he was seldom at his best at large dinners or formal occasions. His best talk might have been described by a phrase which he used about his father. It was pat and intuitive and had a "smiting" quality. He was never guilty of abusing anecdote,—that frequent instrument of social oppression,—but he loved and told a good story when it would help the discussion along, and showed a fair gift of mimicry in relating one.<sup>1</sup>

Once, in the early days of their acquaintance, François Pillon, who knew how affectionately James was attached to Harvard University and Cambridge and who assumed that he was a New Englander, asked him about the Puritans. James launched upon a vivacious sketch of their sombre community, and when he had finished Pillon ejaculated with mingled solicitude and astonishment: "Alors! pas un seul bon-vivant parmi vos ancêtres!" The story of the solemn-minded student who stemmed the full tide of a lecture one day by exclaiming, "But, Doctor, Doctor! — to be serious for a moment —," is already well known.

But what counted for the charm and effect of James's conversation more than all else was his lively interest in his interlocutor and in every fresh idea that developed in talk with him. He made the other man feel that he had no desire to pigeon-hole him and dismiss him from further consideration, but that he rejoiced in him as a fellow creature, unique like himself and forever fascinating. "How delicious," he cried, "is the fact that you can't cram individuals under cut-and-dried heads of classification!" He fell instinctively into the other man's mental stride while he drew him out about his age, occupation, history, family circumstances, theories, prejudices, and peculiarities. He abounded in sympathy and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Henry James's *Life of W. W. Story*, vol. II, p. 204, where there is a passage which sounds reminiscent of the author's father and brother.

even enthusiasm for the other's personal aims and peculiar ideals.

His first reaction to a new scene or to fresh contact with a foreign people was apt to be one of admiration. "How jolly it looks!" he would exclaim, "and how superior in such and such ways to that last!" "How *good* they seem!" "How sound and worthy to be given its chance to develop is such a civilization!" Restlessness, discriminating moods, and a longing for the "simplifications" of home soon followed; but even when restlessness and homesickness became acute, their effect was not permanent. He was no sooner back in his own home than the peculiar virtues of the place and people from whom he had fled shone again as unique and precious to the universe. It was good that there should be one Oxford, and that it should cling to every ancient peculiarity without surrendering to the spirit of the age — and good too that there should be one Chautauqua!

For James was perennially "keen" about new things and future things, about beginnings and promises. His mind looked forward eagerly. Youth never bored him. Anything spontaneous, young, or original was likely to excite him. And then he would pour out expressions of approval and acclaim. Brilliant students and young authors were often "little genuises"; he guessed that they would "produce something very big before long"; they had already arrived at "an important vision," or had "driven their spear into the Universe where its ribs are short"; they were going to make "perhaps the most original contribution to philosophy that anyone had made for a generation."

It must be admitted that his recognition would occasionally have had a happier effect had it been less encouraging. But he enjoyed being generous and hated to spoil

a gift of praise by "stingy" qualifications. He might have said that the great point was not to let any unique virtue in a man evaporate or be wasted. At any rate, he said, that should be seen to in a university. He was quite unconventional in recognizing originality, and preferred all the risks involved in hailing potentialities that might never come to fruition, to a policy of playing safe in his estimates. Yet on the whole he very seldom "fooled himself." Few men who have possessed a comparable gift of discovering special virtues in different individuals have combined with it so just a sense of what could not be expected of those same individuals in the way of other virtues.

But there would be danger of misunderstanding if this trait were mentioned without an important qualification. The reader will do well, in interpreting any judgment of James's to consider whether the book, or theory, or man under consideration was new and unrecognized, or was already established and secure of a place in men's esteem. In the former case, especially if there was anything in the situation to appeal to James's natural "inclination to succor the under-dog," his praise was likely to be extravagantly expressed and his reservations were apt to be withheld. In the latter case he was no less certain to give free rein to his critical discernment. Men who knew him as a teacher are likely to remember how he encouraged them in their efforts on the one hand, and on the other how stimulating to them and enlarging to their mental horizons were his free and often destructive comments upon famous books and illustrious men.

As a teacher at Harvard for thirty-five years, he influenced the lives and thoughts of more than a generation of students who sat in his classes. To many of them he was an adviser as well as a teacher, and to some he was a life-



long friend. Such was the character of his books and public discourses that people of all sorts and conditions from outside the University came to him or wrote to him for encouragement and counsel. The burden of his message to all was the bracing text which he himself loved and lived by — "Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee." He never tried to win disciples, to compel allegiance to his own doctrines, or to found a school. But he taught countless young men to love philosophy, and helped many a troubled soul besides to face the problems of the universe in an independent and gallant spirit. He helped them by example as well as by precept, for it was plain to everyone who knew him or read him that his genius was ardently adventurous and humane.

## II

1861-1864

### *Chemistry and Comparative Anatomy in the Lawrence Scientific School*

IN the autumn of 1861 James turned to scientific work, and began what was to become a lifelong connection with Cambridge and Harvard University by registering for the study of chemistry in the Lawrence Scientific School. Among the students who were in the School in his time were several who were to be his friends and colleagues in later years — Nathaniel S. Shaler, later Professor of Geology and Dean of the Scientific School, Alexander Agassiz, engineer, captain of industry, eminent biologist, and organizer of the museum that his father had founded, the entomologist Samuel H. Scudder, F. W. Putnam, who afterwards became Curator of the Peabody Museum of Ethnology and Anthropology, and Alpheus Hyatt, the palæontologist, who was Curator of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Harvard for many years before his death in 1902. The chemical laboratory of the school had just been placed under the charge of Charles W. Eliot,— in 1869 to become President Eliot,— who writes: "I first came in contact with William James in the academic year 1861-62. As I was young and inexperienced, it was fortunate for me that there were but fifteen students of chemistry in the Scientific School that year, and that I was therefore able to devote a good deal of attention to the laboratory work of each student. The instruction was given chiefly in the laboratory and was therefore individual. James was a very interesting and agreeable pupil, but was not wholly devoted to

the study of Chemistry. During the two years in which he was registered as a student in Chemistry, his work was much interfered with by ill-health, or rather by something which I imagined to be a delicacy of nervous constitution. His excursions into other sciences and realms of thought were not infrequent; his mind was excursive, and he liked experimenting, particularly novel experimenting. . . . I received a distinct impression that he possessed unusual mental powers, remarkable spirituality, and great personal charm.<sup>1</sup> This impression became later useful to Harvard University."

Henry James published many of the few still existing letters which William wrote during this time in his "Notes of a Son and Brother." Three of them are among the first six selected for inclusion here. The fun and extravagance of these early letters is so full of an intimate raillery that they should be read in their context in that book, where the whole family has been made to live again. The first of the letters that follow was written a few weeks after the opening of the autumn term in which James began his course in chemistry. The son of Professor Benjamin Peirce (the

<sup>1</sup> The following entries occur among some "notes on his students" which President Eliot made at the time —

"First term, '61-'62, James, W., entered this term, passed examination on qualitative analysis well."

"Second term, '61-'62, James, W., studied quantitative analysis. Irregular in attendance at laboratory, passed examination on Fownes's Organic Chemistry, mark 85."

"First term, '62-'63, James, W., studied quantitative analysis and was tolerably punctual at recitations till Thanksgiving, when he began an investigation of the effects of different bread-raising materials on the urine. He worked steadily on this until the end of the term, mastering the processes, and studying the effect of yeast on bicarbonate of sodium and bitartrate of potash." The investigation referred to consisted of experiments of which he himself was the subject.

There is no record for the second term of 1862-63.

President Eliot has generously supplied the Editor with a memorandum on William James's connection with the College, from which these, and several statements below, have been drawn.

mathematician) of whom it makes mention was the brilliant but erratic Charles S. Peirce, to whom other references appear in later letters, and whose name James subsequently associated with his pragmatism. "Harry," "Wilky" and "Bobby" will be recognized as William's younger brothers. Wilky was at the Sanborn School in Concord, thirteen miles away. Bobby was in Newport, under the parental roof at 13 Kay Street. The Emerson referred to was R. W. Emerson's son, Edward W. Emerson, and "Tom" Ward, the Thomas W. Ward of a lifelong friendship and of several later letters and allusions.

*To his Family.*

CAMBRIDGE, *Sunday Afternoon, Sept. 16, 1861.*

DEAREST FAMILY,— This morning, as I was busy over the tenth page of a letter to Wilky, in he popped and made my labor of no account. I had intended to go and see him yesterday, but concluded to delay as I had plenty of work to do and did not wish to take the relish off the visits by making them frequent when I was not home-sick. Moreover, Emerson and Tom Ward were going on, and I thought he would have too much of a good thing. But he walked over this morning with, or rather without them, for he went astray and arrived very hot and dusty. I gave him a bath and took him to dinner and he is now gone to see [Andrew?] Robeson and Emerson. His plump corpusculus looks as always. He says it is pretty lonely at Concord and he misses Bob's lively and sportive wiles very much in the long and lone and dreary evenings, tho' he consoles himself by thinking he will have a great time at study. I have at last got to feel quite settled and homelike. I write in my new parlor whither I moved yesterday. You have no idea what an improvement it is on the old affair, worth double the

price, and the little bedroom under the roof is perfectly delicious, with a charming outlook upon little backyards with trees and pretty old brick walls. The sun is upon *this* room from earliest dawn till late in the afternoon — a capital thing in winter.

I like Mrs. Upham's very much. Dark, aristocratic dining-room, with royal cheer — "fish, roast-beef, veal-cutlets or pigeons?" says the splendid, tall, noble-looking, white-armed, black-eyed Juno of a handmaid as you sit down. And for dessert, a choice of three, *three* of the most succulent, unctuous (no, not unctuous, unless you imagine a celestial unction without the oil) pie-ey confections, always two plates full — my eye! She has an admirable chemical, not mechanical, combination of jam and cake and cream, which I recommend to mother if she is ever at a loss; though she has no well-stored pantry like that of good old 13 Kay Street; or if she has, it exists not for miserable me. I get up at six, breakfast and study till nine, when I go to school till one, when dinner, a short loaf and work again till five, then gymnasium or walk till tea, and after that, visit, work, literature, correspondence, etc., etc., till ten, when I "divest myself of my wardrobe" and lay my weary head upon my downy pillow and dreamily think of dear old home and Father and Mother and brothers and sister and aunt and cousins and all that the good old Newport sun shines upon, until consciousness is lost. My time last week was fully occupied, and I suspect will be so all winter — I hope so.

This chemical analysis is so bewildering at first that I am entirely "muddled and beat" <sup>1</sup> and have to employ most all my time reading up. Agassiz gives now a course of

<sup>1</sup> The expression was undoubtedly recognized in Kay Street as borrowed from the Lincolnshire boor, in Fitzjames Stephen's *Essay on Spirit-Rapping*, who

lectures in Boston, to which I have been. He is evidently a great favorite with his audience and feels so himself. But he is an admirable, earnest lecturer, clear as day, and his accent is most fascinating. I should like to study under him. Prof. Wyman's lectures on [the] Comp[arative] anatomy of vert[ebrates] promise to be very good; prosy perhaps a little and monotonous, but plain and packed full and well arranged (*nourris*). Eliot I have not seen much of; I don't believe he is a *very* accomplished chemist, but can't tell yet. Young [Charles] Atkinson, nephew of Miss Staigg's friend, is a very nice boy. I walked over to Brookline yesterday afternoon with him to see his aunt, who received me very cordially. There is something extremely good about her. The rest of this year's class is nothing wonderful. In last year's there is a son of Prof. Peirce, whom I suspect to be a very "smart" fellow with a great deal of character, pretty independent and violent though. [Storrow] Higginson I like very well. [John] Ropes is always out, so I have not seen him again.

We are only about twelve in the laboratory, so that we have a very cosy time. I expect to have a winter of "crowded" life. I can be as independent as I please, and want to live regardless of the good or bad opinion of everyone. I shall have a splendid chance to try, I know, and I know too that the "native hue of resolution" has never been of very great shade in me hitherto. But I am sure that that feeling is a right one, and I mean to live according to it if I can. If I do, I think I shall turn out all right.

I stopped this letter before tea, when Wilk the rosy-gilled and Higginson came in. I now resume it after tea by the light of a taper and that of the moon. This room

ended his life with the words, "What with faith, and what with the earth a-turning round the sun, and what with the railroads a-fuzzing and a-whizzing, I'm clean stonied, muddled and beat."

is without gas and I must get some of the jovial Harry's abhorred kerosene tomorrow. Wilk read Harry's letter and amused me "metch" by his naïve interpretation of mother's most rational request "that I should keep a memorandum of all monies I receive from Father." He thought it was that she might know exactly what sums the prodigal philosopher really gave out, and that mistrust of his generosity caused it. The phrase has a little sound that way, as Harry framed it, I confess. . . .

"Kitty" Temple, next addressed, was the eldest of four Temple cousins, who were daughters of Henry James, Senior's, favorite sister. Having lost both their parents the Temple children had come to live in Newport under the care of their paternal aunt, Mrs. Edmund Tweedie. The fast friendship between the elder Jameses and the Tweedies, the relationship between the two groups of children and the parity of their ages resulted in the Jameses, Temples and Tweedies all living almost as one family. "Minny," Kitty's younger sister, was about seventeen years old and was the enchanting and most adored of all the charming and freely circulating young relatives with whom William had more or less grown up. Henry James drew two of his most appealing heroines from her image,—Minny Theale in the "Wings of the Dove" and Isabel Archer in "The Portrait of a Lady,"—and she is still more authentically revealed by references that recur in "Notes of a Son and Brother" and in the bundle of her own letters with which that volume beautifully closes. In a long-after year William, who was fondly devoted to her, received an early letter of hers containing an affectionate reference to himself and wrote to the friend who had sent it: "I am deeply thankful to you for sending me this letter, which revives all sorts

of poignant memories and makes her live again in all her lightness and freedom. Few spirits have been more free than hers. I find myself wishing so that she could know me as I am now. As for knowing her as *she* is now??!! I find that she means as much in the way of human character for me now as she ever did, being unique and with no analogue in all my subsequent experience of people. Thank you once more for what you have done." At the time of the next letter, "Minny" had just cut her hair short, and a photograph of her new aspect was the occasion of the badinage about her madness. "Dr. Prince" was an alienist to whom another James cousin had lately been married.

*To Miss Katharine Temple (Mrs. Richard Emmet).*

CAMBRIDGE, [Sept. 1861].

MY DEAR KITTY,—Imagine if you can with what palpitations I tore open the rude outer envelope of your precious, long-looked-for missive. I read it by the glimmer of the solitary lamp which at eventide lights up the gloom of the dark and humid den called Post Office. And as I read on unconscious of the emotion I was betraying, a vast crowd collected. Profs. Agassiz and Wyman ran with their notebooks and proceeded to take observations of the greatest scientific import. I with difficulty reached my lodgings. When thereout fell the Photograph. Wheeeew! oohoo! aha! la-la! [*Marks representing musical flourish*] boisteroso triumphissimmo, chassez to the right, cross over, forward two, hornpipe and turn summerset! Up came the fire engines; but I proudly waved them aside and plunged bareheaded into the chill and gloomy bowels of the night, to recover by violent exercise the use of my reasoning faculties, which had almost been annihilated by the shock of happiness. As I stalked along, an understanding of



the words in your letter grew upon me, and then I felt, my sober senses returning, that I ought not to be so elate. For you certainly bring me bad news enough. Elly's arm broken and Minny gone mad should make me rather drop a tear than laugh.

But leaving poor Elly's case for the present, let's speak of Minny and her fearful catastrophe. Do you know, Kitty,—now that it's all over, I don't see why I should not tell you,—I have often had flashes of horrid doubts about that girl. Occasionally I have caught a glance from her furtive eye, a glance so wild, so weird, so strange, that it has frozen the innermost marrow in my bones; and again the most sickening feeling has come over me as I have noticed fleeting shades of expression on her face, so short, but ah! so piercingly pregnant of the mysteries of mania — *unhuman*, ghoul-like, fiendish-cunning! Ah me! ah me! Now that my worst suspicions have proved true, I feel sad indeed. The well-known, how-often fondly-contemplated features tell the whole story in the photograph taken, as you say, a few days before the crisis. Madness is plainly lurking in that lurid eye, stamps indelibly the arch of the nostril and the curve of the lip, and in ambush along the soft curve of the cheek it lies ready to burst forth in consuming fire. But oh! still is it not pity to think that that fair frame, whilom the chosen fane of intellect and heart, clear and white as noonday's beams, should now be a vast desert through whose lurid and murky glooms glare but the fitful forked lightnings of fuliginous insanity! —Well, Kitty, after all, it is but an organic lesion of the gray cortical substance which forms the *pia mater* of the brain, which is very consoling to us all. Was she all alone when she did it? Could no one wrest the shears from her vandal hand? I declare I fear to return home,—but of

course Dr. Prince has her by this time. I shall weep as soon as I have finished this letter.

But now, to speak seriously, I am really shocked and grieved at hearing of poor little Elly's accident and of her suffering. I suppose she bears it though like one of the Amazons of old. I suppose the proper thing for me to do would be to tell her how naughty and careless she was to go and risk her bones in that unprincipled way, and how it will be a good lesson to her for the future about climbing into swings, etc., etc., *ad libitum*; but I will leave that to you, as her elder sister (I have no doubt you've dosed her already), and convey to her only the expression of my warmest condolence and sympathy. I hope to see her getting on finely when I come home, which will be shortly. After all it will soon be over, and then her arm will be better than ever, twice as strong, and who of us are exempt from pain? Take me, for example: you might weep tears of blood to see me day after day forced to hold ignited crucibles in my naked hands till the eyes of my neighbors water and their throats choke with the dense fumes of the burning leather. Yet I ask for no commiseration. - Nevertheless I bestow it upon poor Elly, to whom give my best love and say I look forward to seeing her soon.

And Henrietta the ablebodied and strongminded — your report of her constancy touched me more than anything has for a long while. Tell her to stick it out for a few days longer and she will be richly rewarded by an apple and a chestnut *from Massachusetts*. As for yourself and sister in the affair of the wings, 't is but what I expected, — I am too old now to expect much from human nature, — yet after such length of striving to please, so many months of incessant devotion, one *must* feel a slight twinge. If your sister can still understand, let her know that I thank her

for her photograph. Too bad, too bad! With her long locks she would still be winning, outwardly, spite of the howling fiends within; but they gone, like Samson, she has nothing left.— But now, my dear Kitty, I must put an end to my scribbling. This writing in the middle of the week is an unheard-of license, for I must work, work, work. Relentless Chemistry claims its hapless victim. Excuse all faults of grammar, punctuation, spelling and sense on the score of telegraphic haste. Love to all and to yourself. Please “remember me” to your aunt Charlotte, and believe [me] yours affectionately,

W. J.

*To his Family.*

CAMBRIDGE,

Sunday afternoon [*Early Nov.*, 1861].

DEARLY BELOVED FAMILY,— Wilky and I have just returned from dinner, and having completed a concert for the benefit of the inmates of Pasco Hall and the Hall next door, turn ourselves, I to writing a word home, he to digesting in a “lobbing” position on the sofa. Wilky wrote you a complete account of our transactions in Boston yesterday much better than I could have done. I suppose you will ratify our action as it seemed the only one possible to us. The radiance of Harry’s visit <sup>1</sup> has not faded yet, and I come upon gleams of it three or four times a day in my farings to and fro; but it has never a bit diminished the lustre of far-off shining Newport all silver and blue and this heavenly group below <sup>2</sup> (all being more or less failures, especially the two outside ones),— the more so as the above-

<sup>1</sup> A diary of Mr. T. S. Perry’s has fixed the date of this visit as Oct. 31–Nov. 4.

<sup>2</sup> W. J. could make much better drawings than the ones which he enclosed in this letter.

mentioned Harry could in no wise satisfy my cravings to know of the family and friends, as he did not seem to have been on speaking terms with any of them for some time past and could tell me nothing of what they did, said, or thought about any given subject. Never did I see a so much uninterested creature in the affairs of those about him. He is a good soul though in his way, too — much more so than the light fantastic Wilky, who has been doing nothing but disaster since he has been here, breaking down my good resolutions about eating, keeping me from any intellectual exercise, ruining my best hat wearing it while dressing, while in his night-gown, wishing to wash his face with it on, insisting on sleeping in my bed, inflicting on me thereby the pains of crucifixion, and hardly to be prevented from taking the said hat to bed with him. The odious creature occupied my comfortable armchair all the morning in the position represented in the fine plate which accompanies this letter. But one more night though and he shall be gone and no thorn shall be in the side of the serene and hallowed felicity of expectation in which I shall revel until the time comes for going home, home, home to the hearts of my infancy and budding youth.

It is not homesickness I have, if by that term be meant a sickness of heart and loathing of my present surroundings, but a sentiment far transcending this, that makes my hair curl for joy whenever I think of home, by which home comes to me as hope, not as regret, and which puts roses long faded thence in my old mother's cheeks, mildness in my father's voice, flowing graces into my Aunt Kate's movements, babbling confidingness into Harry's talk, a straight parting into Robby's hair and a heavenly tone into the lovely babe's temper, the elastic graces of a kitten into Moses's <sup>1</sup> rusty

<sup>1</sup> A horse.

and rheumatic joints. Aha! Aha! The time will come — Thanksgiving in less than two weeks and then, oh, then! — probably a cold reception, half repellent, no fatted calf, no fresh-baked loaf of spicy bread,— but I dare not think of that side of the picture. I will ever hope and trust and my faith shall be justified.

As Wilky has submitted to you a résumé of his future history for the next few years, so will I, hoping it will meet your approval. Thus: one year study chemistry, then spend one term at home, then one year with Wyman, then a medical education, then five or six years with Agassiz, then probably death, death, death with inflation and plethora of knowledge. This you had better seriously consider. This is a glorious day and I think I must close and take a walk. So farewell, farewell until a quarter to nine Sunday evening soon! Your bold, your beautiful,

Your Blossom!!

*Dedicated to Miss Kitty, oh! I beg pardon, to Miss Temple.*

The following curious facts were discovered by the Chemist James in some of his recent investigations:

At Pensacola, Fla., there is a navy yard, and consequently many officers of the U. S. A.

In Pensacola there is a larger proportional number of old maids than in any city of the Union.

The ladies of Pensacola, instead of seeking an eligible partner in the middle ranks of society, spend their lives in a vain attempt to entrap the officers who flirt with them and then leave Pensacola. The moral lesson is evident.

The "Kitty" to whom James addressed the next letter was another cousin, the daughter of one of his father's elder brothers. Her husband was the alienist to whom

the reader will remember that the mad Minny was consigned in a previous letter. It should also be explained that James's two youngest brothers had now entered the Union army, and that one of them, Wilky, adjutant of the first colored regiment, had been wounded in the charge on Fort Wagner in which Colonel Robert Gould Shaw was killed.

*To Mrs. Katharine James (Mrs. William H.) Prince.*

CAMBRIDGE, *Sept.* 12, 1863.

MY DEAR COUSIN KITTY,—I was very agreeably surprised at getting your letter a few days after arriving here, and am heartily glad to find that you still remember me and think sometimes of the visit you paid us that happy summer. I often think of you, and at such times feel very much like renewing our delightful converse. Several times I have been on the uttermost *brink* of writing to you, but somehow or other I have always quailed at plunging over. Nature makes us so awkward. I again felt several times like going to pay you a short visit,—last winter and this spring, I remember,—but hesitated, never having been invited, and being entirely ignorant how you would receive me, whether you would chain me up in your asylum and scourge me, or what — tho' I believe those good old days are over.

When you were at our house, I recollect I was in the first flush of my chemical enthusiasm. A year and a half of hard work at it here has somewhat dulled my ardor; and after half a year's vegetation at home, I am back here again, studying this time Comparative Anatomy. I am obliged before the 15th of January to make finally and irrevocably "the choice of a profession." I suppose your sex, which has, or should have, its bread brought to it, instead of having

to go in search of it, has no idea of the awful responsibility of such a choice. I have four alternatives: Natural History, Medicine, Printing, Beggary. Much may be said in favor of each. I have named them in the ascending order of their pecuniary invitingness. After all, the great problem of life seems to be how to keep body and soul together, and I *have* to consider lucre. To study natural science, I know I should like, but the prospect of supporting a family on \$600 a year is not one of those rosy dreams of the future with which the young are said to be haunted. Medicine would pay, and I should still be dealing with subjects which interest me — but how much drudgery and of what an unpleasant kind is there! Of all departments of Medicine, that to which Dr. Prince devotes himself is, I should think, the most interesting. And I should like to see him and his patients at Northampton very much before coming to a decision.

The worst of this matter is that everyone must more or less act with insufficient knowledge — “go it blind,” as they say. Few can afford the time to try what suits them. However, a few months will show. I shall be most happy some day to avail myself of your very cordial invitation. I have heard so much of the beauty of Northampton that I want very much to see the place too.

I heard from home day before yesterday that “Wilky was improving daily.” I hope he is, poor fellow. His wound is a very large and bad one and he will be confined to his bed a long while. He bears it like a man. He is the best abolitionist you ever saw, and makes a common one, as we are, feel very small and shabby. Poor little Bob is before Charleston, too. We have not heard from him in a very long while. He made an excellent officer in camp here, every one said, and was promoted.

But I must stop. I hope, now that the ice is broken, you will soon feel like writing again. And, if you please, eschew all formality in addressing me by dropping the title of our relationship before my name. As for you, the case is different. My senior, a grave matron, quasi-mother of I know not how many scores, not of children, but of live lunatics, which is far more exceptional and awe-inspiring, I tremble to think I have shown too much levity and familiarity already. Are you very different from what you were two years ago? As no word has passed between us since then, I suppose I should have begun by congratulating you first on your engagement, which is I believe the fashionable thing, then on your marriage, tho' I don't rightly know whether that is fashionable or not. At any rate I now end. Yours most sincerely,

WM. JAMES.

*To his Mother.*

CAMBRIDGE, [*circa Sept.*, 1863].

MY DEAREST MOTHER,— . . . To answer the weighty questions which you propound: I am glad to leave Newport because I am tired of the place itself, and because of the reason which you have very well expressed in your letter, the necessity of the whole family being near the arena of the future activity of us young men. I recommend Cambridge on account of its own pleasantness (though I don't wish to be invidious towards Brookline, Longwood, and other places) and because of its economy if I or Harry continue to study here much longer. . . .

I feel very much the importance of making soon a final choice of my business in life. I stand now at the place where the road forks. One branch leads to material comfort, the flesh-pots; but it seems a kind of selling of one's



soul. The other to mental dignity and independence; combined, however, with physical penury. If I myself were the only one concerned I should not hesitate an instant in my choice. But it seems hard on Mrs. W. J., "that not impossible she," to ask her to share an empty purse and a cold hearth. On one side is *science*, upon the other *business* (the honorable, honored and productive business of printing seems most attractive), with *medicine*, which partakes of [the] advantages of both, between them, but which has drawbacks of its own. I confess I hesitate. I fancy there is a fond maternal cowardice which would make you and every other mother contemplate with complacency the worldly fatness of a son, even if obtained by some sacrifice of his "higher nature." But I fear there might be some anguish in looking back from the pinnacle of prosperity (*necessarily* reached, if not by eating dirt, at least by renouncing some divine ambrosia) over the life you might have led in the pure pursuit of truth. It seems as if one *could* not afford to give that up for any bribe, however great. Still, I am undecided. The medical term opens tomorrow and between this and the end of the term here, I shall have an opportunity of seeing a little into medical business. I shall confer with Wyman about the prospects of a naturalist and finally decide. I want you to become familiar with the notion that I *may* stick to science, however, and drain away at your property for a few years more. If I can get into Agassiz's museum I think it not improbable I may receive a salary of \$400 to \$500 in a couple of years. I know some stupider than I who have done so. You see in that case how desirable it would be to have a home in Cambridge. Anyhow, I am convinced that somewhere in this neighborhood is the place for us to rest. These matters have been a good deal on my mind lately, and I am very

glad to get this chance of pouring them into yours. As for the other boys, I don't know. And that idle and useless young female, Alice, too, whom we shall have to feed and clothe! . . . Cambridge is all right for business in Boston. Living in Boston or Brookline, etc., would be as expensive as Newport if Harry or I stayed here, for we could not easily go home every day.

Give my warmest love to Aunt Kate, Father, who I hope will not tumble again, and all of them over the way. Re-cess in three weeks; till then, my dearest and best of old mothers, good-bye! Your loving son,

W. J.

[P.S.] Give my best love to Kitty and give *cette petite* humbug of a Minny a hint about writing to me. I hope you liked your shawl.

The physical and nervous frailty, which President Eliot had noticed in James during the first winter at the Scientific School, and which later manifested itself so seriously as to interfere with his studies, kept him from enlisting in the Federal armies during the Civil War. The case was too clear to occasion discussion in his letters. He continued as a student at the School and, at about the time the foregoing letter was written, transferred himself from the Chemical Department to the Department of Comparative Anatomy and Physiology, in which Professor Jeffries Wyman was teaching. It was in these two subjects that he himself was to begin teaching ten years later. The next year (1864-65), when he entered the Medical School, Professor Wyman was again his instructor.

Jeffries Wyman (1814-1874) was a less widely effective man than Agassiz, but his influence counted more in James's student years than did that of any other teacher. "All the

young men who worked under him," says President Eliot, "took him as the type of scientific zeal, disinterestedness and candor." N. S. Shaler, an admirable judge of men, has recorded his opinion of Wyman in his autobiography, saying: "In some ways he was the most perfect naturalist I have ever known . . . within the limits of his powers he had the best-balanced mind it has been my good fortune to come into contact with. . . . Though he published but little, his store of knowledge of the whole field of natural history was surprisingly great, and, as I came to find, it greatly exceeded that of my master Agassiz in its range and accuracy."<sup>1</sup>

James, who was Wyman's pupil during two critical years, held him in particular reverence and affection, and said of him: "Those who year by year received part or all of their first year's course of medical instruction from him always speak with a sort of worship of their preceptor. His extraordinary effect on all who knew him is to be accounted for by the one word, character. Never was a man so absolutely without detractors. The quality which every one first thinks of in him is his extraordinary modesty, of which his unfailing geniality and serviceableness, his readiness to confer with and listen to younger men — how often did his unmagisterial manner lead them unawares into taking dogmatic liberties, which soon resulted in ignominious collapse before his quiet wisdom! — were kindred manifestations. Next were his integrity, and his complete and simple devotion to objective truth. These qualities were what gave him such incomparable fairness of judgment in both scientific and worldly matters, and made his opinions so weighty even when they were unaccompanied by reasons. . . . An accomplished draughtsman, his love and understanding of

<sup>1</sup> N. S. Shaler, *Autobiography*, pp. 105 ff.

art were great. . . . He had if anything too little of the *ego* in his composition, and all his faults were excesses of virtue. A little more restlessness of ambition, and a little more willingness to use other people for his purposes, would easily have made him more abundantly productive, and would have greatly increased the sphere of his effectiveness and fame. But his example on us younger men, who had the never-to-be-forgotten advantage of working by his side, would then have been, if not less potent, at least different from what we now remember it; and we prefer to think of him forever as the paragon that he was of goodness, disinterestedness, and single-minded love of the truth.”<sup>1</sup>

The stream of James’s correspondence still flowed entirely for his family at this time, and his letters were often facetious accounts of his way of life and occupations.

*To his Sister* (age 15).

CAMBRIDGE, Sept. 13, 1863.

CHÉRIE CHARMANTE DE BAL,—Notwithstanding the abuse we poured on each other before parting and the (on *my* part) feigned expressions of joy at not meeting you again for so many months, it was with the liveliest regret that I left Newport before your return. But I was obliged in order to get a room here — drove, literally drove to it. That you should not have written to me for so long grieves me more than words can tell — you who have nothing to do besides. It shows you to have little affection and *that* of a poor quality. I have, however, heard from *others* who tell me that Wilky is doing well, “improving daily,” which I am very glad indeed to hear. I am glad you had such a pleasant summer. I am nicely established in a cosy little room, with a large recess with a window in it, containing bed

<sup>1</sup> *Harvard Advocate*, Oct. 1, 1874.

and washstand, separated from the main apartment by a rich green silken curtain and a large gilt cornice. This gives the whole establishment a splendid look.

I found when I got here that Miss Upham had changed her price to \$5.00. Great efforts were made by two of us to raise a club, but little enthusiasm was shown by anyone else and it fell through. I then, with that fine economical instinct which distinguishes me, resolved to take a tea and breakfast of bread and milk in my room and only pay Miss Upham for dinners. Miss U. is at Swampscott. So I asked to see [her sister] Mrs. Wood, to learn the cost of seven dinners. She, with true motherly instinct, said that I should only make a slop in my room, and that she would rather let me keep on for \$4.50, seeing it was me. I said she must first consult Miss Upham. She returned from Swampscott saying that Miss U. had sworn *she* would rather pay *me* a dollar a week than have me go away. Ablaze with economic passion, I cried "Done!" trying to make it appear as if she had made a formal offer to that effect. But she would not admit it, and after much recrimination we were separated, it being agreed that I should come for \$4.50, *but tell no-one*. (Mind *you* don't either.) I now lay my hand on my heart, and confidently look towards my mother for that glance of approbation which she *must* bestow. Have I not redeemed any weaknesses of the past? Though part of my conception failed, yet it was boldly planned and would have been a noble stroke.

I have been pretty busy this week. I have a filial feeling towards Wyman already. I work in a vast museum, at a table all alone, surrounded by skeletons of mastodons, crocodiles, and the like, with the walls hung about with monsters and horrors enough to freeze the blood. But I have no fear, as most of them are tightly bottled up. Occa-

sionally solemn men and women come in to see the museum, and sometimes timid little girls (reminding me of thee, beloved, only they are less fashionably dressed) who whisper: "Is folks allowed here?" It pains me to remark, however, that not all the little girls are of this pleasing type, *most* being boldfaced jigs. How does Wilky get on? Is Mayberry gone? How is he nursed? Who holds his foot for the doctor? Tell me all about him. Everyone here asks about him, and all without exception seem enthusiastic about the darkeys. How has Aunt Kate's knee been since her return? Sorry indeed was I to leave without seeing her. Give her my best love. Is Kitty Temple as angelic as ever? Give my best love to her and Minny and the little ones. (My little friend Elly, how often I think of her!) Have your lessons with Bradford (the brandy-witness) begun? You may well blush. Tell Harry Mr. [Francis J.] Child is here, just as usual; Mrs. C. at Swampscott. [C. C.] Salter back, but morose. One or two new students, and Prof. [W. W.] Goodwin, who is a very agreeable man. Among other students, a son of Ed. Everett [William Everett], very intelligent and a capital scholar, studying law. He took honors at Cambridge, England. Tucks, *mère & fille* away, *fil's* here. . . .

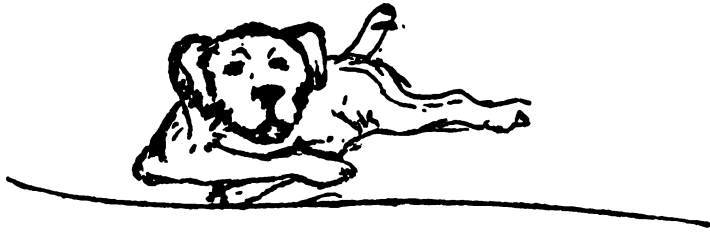
I send a photograph of Gen. Sickles for yours and Wilky's amusement. It is a part of a great anthropomorphological collection<sup>1</sup> which I am going to make. So take care of it, as well as of all the photographs you will find in the table drawer in my room. But is n't he a bully boy? Harry's

<sup>1</sup> The "great anthropomorphological collection" consisted of photographs of authors, scientists, public characters, and also people whose only claim upon his attention was that their physiognomies were in some way typical or striking. James never arranged the collection or preserved it carefully, but he filled at least one album in early days, and he almost always kept some drawer or box at hand and dropped into it portraits cut from magazines or obtained in other ways. He seemed to crave a visual image of everybody who interested him at all.

handwriting much better. Desecrate my room as little as possible. Good-bye, much love to Wilky and all. If he wants nursing send for me without hesitation. Love to the Tweedies. Have n't you heard yet from Bobby?

Your aff. bro.,

Wm.



Pencil Sketch from a Pocket Note-Book.

### III

1864-1866

#### *The Harvard Medical School — With Louis Agassiz to the Amazon*

IN 1864 the family moved from Newport to Boston, where Henry James, Senior, took a house on Ashburton Place (No. 13) for two years, and there was no more occasion for family letters. Although James began the regular course at the Medical School, he had arrived at no clear professional purpose and no selection of any particular field of study. The School afforded him some measure of preparation for natural science as well as for practice.

Philosophy had undoubtedly begun to beckon him, although its appealing gesture lacked authority and did not enlist him in any regular course of philosophic studies. In sixty-five he wrote to his brother Henry from Brazil saying, "When I get home, I'm going to study philosophy all my days." But in many respects his character and tastes matured slowly. The instruction offered by Professor Francis Bowen in Harvard College does not appear to have excited his interest at all. It cannot have failed to excite the irony of his father,— as did everything of the sort that was academic and orthodox,— and James would have been aware of this and might have been influenced. On the other hand, it was obvious that, in the case of his father, who had no connection with church, college or school, the consideration and expression of theories and beliefs had always been a totally unremunerative occupation; and



James had to consider how to earn a living. His prospective share of the property that had sufficed for his parents was clearly not going to be enough to support him in independent leisure. In the way of bread and butter, biology and medicine offered more than metaphysical speculation. Last and most important, the tide of contemporary inquiry, driven forward by the storm of the Darwinian controversy, was setting strongly toward a fresh examination of nature. Philosophy must embrace the new reality. Everything that was stimulating in contemporary thought urged men to the scrutiny of the phenomenal world. "Natural History," which has since diversified and amplified itself beyond the use of that appellation, was almost romantically "having its day."

Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,  
Und grün des Lebens goldener Baum.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Goethe, and Louis Agassiz, whose lectures James had already followed, and with the abundance of whose inspiring activity no other scientific energizing could then compare, was fond of quoting the lines.

Under such circumstances it was not strange that James should interrupt his medical studies in order to join the expedition which Agassiz was preparing to lead to the Amazon.

No richer or more instructive experience could well have offered itself to him at twenty-three than this journey to Brazil seemed to promise. He was no sooner on the Amazon, however, than it became clear to him that he was not intended to be a field-naturalist; and he pictured the stages of this self-discovery in long, diary-like letters which he

<sup>1</sup> All theory is gray, dear friend,  
But the golden tree of life is green.

sent home to his family. On arriving at Rio he was forced to consider the question of his going on or coming home, by an illness that kept him quarantined for several uncomfortable weeks, and left him depressed and unable to use his eyes during several weeks more. Although he decided in favor of continuing with Agassiz, he revealed more and more clearly in his letters that he was seeing Brazil with the eye of an adventurer and lover of landscape rather than of a geologist or collector, and that the months spent in fishing and pickling specimens were to count most for him by teaching him what his vocation was *not*. He found that he was essentially indifferent to the classification of birds, beasts, and fishes, and that he was not made to deal with the riddle of the universe from the only angle of approach that was possible in Agassiz's company.

It would be a mistake, however, to let it appear that nine months of collecting with Louis Agassiz were nine months wasted. There are some men whom it is an education to work under, even though the affair in hand be foreign to one's ultimate concern. Agassiz was such an one, "recognized by all as one of those naturalists in the unlimited sense, one of those folio-copies of mankind, like Linnæus and Cuvier." Thirty years after, James could still say of him: "Since Benjamin Franklin we had never had among us a person of more popularly impressive type. . . . He was so commanding a presence, so curious and enquiring, so responsive and expansive, and so generous and reckless of himself and his own, that everyone said immediately, Here is no musty *savant*, but a man, a great man, a man on the heroic scale, not to serve whom is avarice and sin." <sup>1</sup> — "To see facts and not to argue or *raisonniren* was what life meant for Agassiz," and James, who was

<sup>1</sup> See *Memories and Studies*, pp. 6, 8, and 9; and the address on Agassiz, *passim*.

already incorrigibly interested in the causes, values and purposes of things, and whose education had been most unsystematic, profited by his corrective influence. "James," said Agassiz at this time, "some people perhaps consider you a bright young man; but when you are fifty years old, if they ever speak of you then, what they will say will be this: That James — oh, yes, I know him; he used to be a very bright young man!" Such "cold-water therapeutics" were gratefully accepted from one who was not only a teacher but a kind friend; and James remembered them, and recorded later that "the hours he spent with Agassiz so taught him the difference between all possible abstractionists and all livers in the light of the world's concrete fullness, that he was never able to forget it." Considering with what passionate fidelity his own abstractions always face the concrete, this is perhaps more of an acknowledgment than at first sight appears.

The Thayer Expedition set sail from New York April 1, 1865. The next letter was written from ship-board, still in New York Harbor. The "Professor" will be recognized as Louis Agassiz.

*To his Mother.*

[Mar. 30?], 1865.

. . . We have been detained 48 hours on this steamer in port on account of different accidents. . . . A dense fog is raging which will prevent our going outside as long as it lasts. Sapristi! c'est embêtant. . . .

The Professor has just been expatiating over the map of South America and making projects as if he had Sherman's army at his disposal instead of the ten novices he really has. He may get some students at Rio to accompany the

The Foreboding Meeting  
or  
The Artists' Fate.  
Drama

Dram. Personae.  
Sage of Concord  
W. J. —

Scene  
Parson's boots blacking  
establishment



Enter W. J.

W. J. I say, boy, just give my boots  
a lick.

Enter. S of C.

"The Foreboding Meeting" with Emerson was addressed to  
John Bancroft, and probably occurred in 1864.

myself on Saturday to hear what he had to say on the Relation of Art to Nature, I shd. like to become acquainted with his theory, & to hear him criticize Mr. Cabot's remarkable articles - - -

W. J. Oh! yes! yes! nothing wd. please him more. ~~Except~~ S. of C. So I supposed - -

W. J. But between ourselves, he is rather weak as a metaphysician.

S. of C. Want to know! Mrs. Tappan is my wonder of for his respectability - I have fm. her the very best accounts of him.

W. J. Oh! yes! — S. of C. Well, we must have him!

S. of C. Please to polish my  
immortal boots.

x x x x

S. of C. & W. J. catch sight of  
each other. ~~Meeting & tableau.~~

Heart-rending tableau, and usual  
words of polite salutation. After  
wh. -

S. of C. So I'm not to have my  
boy at Concord on Saturday, - he  
has given me the slip -

W. J. Oh! you mean J. B. Yes, he  
expects to be busy moving all this week.  
Great deal of furniture you know -  
valuable paintings - carpets &c -  
things collected in Europe - can't move  
slowly.

S. of C. So! I had promised

done this Saturday. You must do your best to send him along & red.

W. J. I will do my possible. (They breathe a sigh of relief & exclaim) Fine.

The moral lesson of this Drama w. actually happened on Wednesday, Nov. 3rd is that you must read up on Metaphysics & Esthetics. I will bring a lot of books on Esthetics down with me for you. Show him that care is not original, but too plagiarised from the Japanese poet who says callum, & he will be delighted.

different parties, which will let them be more numerous. I'm sure I hope he will, on account of the language. If each of us has a Portuguese companion, he can do things twice as easily. The Prof. now sits opposite me with his face all aglow, holding forth to the Captain's wife about the imperfect education of the American people. He has talked uninterruptedly for a quarter of an hour at least. I know not how she reacts; I presume she feels somewhat flattered by the attention, however. This morning he made a characteristic speech to Mr. Billings, Mr. Watson's friend. Mr. B. had offered to lend him some books. Agassiz: "May I enter your state-room and take them when I shall want them, sir?" Billings, extending his arm said genially, "Sir, all that I have is yours!" To which, Agassiz, far from being overcome, replied, shaking a monitory finger at the foolishly generous wight, "Look out, sir, dat I take not your skin!" That expresses very well the man. Offering your services to Agassiz is as absurd as it would be for a South Carolinian to invite General Sherman's soldiers to partake of some refreshment when they called at his house. . . .

At this moment Prof. passes behind me and says, "Now today I am going to show you a little what I will have *you* do." Hurray! I have not been able to get a word out of the old animal yet about my fate. I'm only sorry I can't tell *you*. . . .

*To his Parents.*

RIO, BRAZIL, Apr. 21, 1865.

MY DEAREST PARENTS,—Every one is writing home to catch the steamer which leaves Rio on Monday. I do likewise, although, so far, I have very little to say to you. You cannot conceive how pleasant it is to feel that tomor-



row we shall lie in smooth water at Rio and the horrors of this voyage will be over. O the vile Sea! the damned Deep! No one has a right to write about the "nature of Evil," or to have any opinion about evil, who has not been at sea. The awful slough of despond into which you are there plunged furnishes too profound an experience not to be a fruitful one. I cannot yet say what the fruit is in my case, but I am sure some day of an accession of wisdom from it. My sickness did not take an actively nauseous form after the first night and second morning; but for twelve mortal days I was, body and soul, in a more indescribably hopeless, homeless and friendless state than I ever want to be in again. We had a head wind and tolerably rough sea all that time. The trade winds, which I thought were gentle zephyrs, are hideous moist gales that whiten all the waves with foam. . . .

*Sunday Evening.* Yesterday morning at ten o'clock we came to anchor in this harbor, sailing right up without a pilot. No words of mine, or of any man short of William the divine, can give any idea of the magnificence of this harbor and its approaches. The boldest, grandest mountains, far and near. The palms and other trees of such vivid green as I never saw anywhere else. The town "realizes" my idea of an African town in its architecture and effect. Almost everyone is a negro or a negress, which words I perceive we don't know the meaning of with us; a great many of them are native Africans and tattooed. The men have white linen drawers and short shirts of the same kind over them; the women wear huge turbans, and have a peculiar rolling gait that I have never seen any approach to elsewhere. Their attitudes as they sleep and lie about the streets are picturesque to the last degree.

Yesterday was, I think, the day of my life on which I

had the most outward enjoyment. Nine of us took a boat at about noon and went on shore. The strange sights, the pleasure of walking on terra firma, the delicious smell of land, compared with the hell of the last three weeks, were perfectly intoxicating. Our Portuguese went beautifully,—every visage relaxed at the sight of us and grinned from ear to ear. The amount of fraternal love that was expressed by bowing and gesture was tremendous. We had the best dinner I ever eat. Guess how much it cost. 140,000 reis — literal fact. Paid for by the rich man of the party. The Brazilians are of a pale Indian color, without a particle of red and with a very aged expression. They are very polite and obliging. *All* wear black beaver hats and glossy black frock coats, which makes them look like *des épiciers endimanchés*. We all returned in good order to the ship at 11 P.M., and I lay awake most of the night on deck listening to the soft notes of the vampire outside of the awning. (Not knowing what it was, we'll call it the vampire.) This morning Tom Ward and I took another cruise on shore, which was equally new and strange. The weather is like Newport. I have not seen the thermometer. . . .

Agassiz just in, delighted with the Emperor's simplicity and the precision of his information; but apparently they did not touch upon our material prospects. He goes to see the Emperor again tomorrow. Agassiz is one of the most fascinating men personally that I ever saw. I could listen to him talk by the hour. He is so childlike. Bishop Potter, who is sitting opposite me writing, asks me to give his best regards to father. I am in such a state of abdominal tumefaction from having eaten bananas all day that I can hardly sit down to write. The bananas here are no whit better than at home, but *so* cheap and *so* filling at the price. My fellow "savans" are a very uninteresting crew. Except

Tom Ward I don't care if I never see one of 'em again. I like Dr. Cotting very much and Mrs. Agassiz too. I could babble on all night, but must stop somewhere.

Dear old Father, Mother, Aunt Kate, Harry and Alice! You little know what thoughts I have had of you since I have been gone. And I have felt more sympathy with Bob and Wilk than ever, from the fact of my isolated circumstances being more like theirs than the life I have led hitherto. Please send them this letter. It is written as much for them as for anyone. I hope Harry is rising like a phoenix from his ashes, under the new régime. Bless him. I wish he or some person I could talk to were along. Thank Aunt Kate once more. Kiss Alice to death. I think Father is the *wisest* of all men whom I know. Give my love to the girls, especially the Hoopers. Tell Harry to remember me to T. S. P[erry] and to Holmes. Adieu.

Your loving

W. J.

Give my love to Washburn.

*To his Father.*

RIO, June 3, 1865.

MY DEAREST OLD FATHER AND MY DEAREST OLD EVERYBODY AT HOME,—I've got so much to say that I don't well know where to begin.—I sent a letter home, I think about a fortnight ago, telling you about my small-pox, etc., but as it went by a sailing vessel it is quite likely that this may reach you first. That was written from the *maison de santé* where I was lying in the embrace of the loathsome goddess, and from whose hard straw bed, eternal chicken and rice, and extortionate prices I was released yesterday. The disease is over, and granting the necessity of having it, I have reason to think myself most lucky. My face will not be

marked at all, although at present it presents the appearance of an immense ripe raspberry. . . . My sickness began four weeks ago today. You have no idea of the state of bliss into which I have been plunged in the last twenty-four hours by the first draughts of my newly gained freedom. To be dressed, to walk about, to see my friends and the public, to go into the dining-room and order my own dinner, to feel myself growing strong and smooth-skinned again, make a very considerable reaction. Now that I know I am no longer an object of infection, I am perfectly cynical as to my appearance and go into the dining-room here when it is at its fullest, having been invited and authorized thereto by the good people of the hotel. I shall stay here for a week before returning to my quarters, although it is very expensive. But I need a soft bed instead of a hammock, and an arm-chair instead of a trunk to sit upon for some days yet. . . .

In my last letter, I said something about coming home sooner than I expected. Since then, I have thought the matter over seriously and conscientiously every day, and it has resulted in my determining so to do. My coming was a mistake, a mistake as regards what I anticipated, and a pretty expensive one both for you, dear old Father, and for the dear generous old Aunt Kate. I find that by staying I shall learn next to nothing of natural history as I care about learning it. My whole work will be mechanical, finding objects and packing them, and working so hard at that and in traveling that no time at all will be found for studying their structure. The affair reduces itself thus to so many months spent in physical exercise. Can I afford this? *First*, pecuniarily? No! Instead of costing the \$600 or \$700 Agassiz told me twelve months of it would cost, the expense will be nearer to triple that amount. . . .

*Secondly*, I can't afford the excursion mentally (though that is not exactly the adjective to use). I said to myself before I came away: "W. J., in this excursion you will learn to know yourself and your resources somewhat more intimately than you do now, and will come back with your character considerably evolved and established." This has come true sooner, and in a somewhat different way, than I expected. I am now certain that my forte is not to go on exploring expeditions. I have no inward spur goading me forwards on that line, as I have on several speculative lines. I am convinced now, for good, that I am cut out for a speculative rather than an active life,—I speak now only of my *quality*; as for my *quantity*, I became convinced some time ago and reconciled to the notion, that I was one of the very lightest of featherweights. Now why not be reconciled with my deficiencies? By accepting them your actions cease to be at cross-purposes with your faculties, and you are so much nearer to peace of mind. On the steamer I began to read Humboldt's Travels. Hardly had I opened the book when I seemed to become illuminated. "Good Heavens, when such men are provided to do the work of traveling, exploring, and observing for humanity, men who gravitate into their work as the air does into our lungs, what need, what *business* have we outsiders to pant after them and toilsomely try to serve as their substitutes? There are men to do all the work which the world requires without the talent of any one being strained." Men's activities are occupied in two ways: in grappling with external circumstances, and in striving to set things at one in their own topsy-turvy mind.

You must know, dear Father, what I mean, tho' I can't must[er] strength of brain enough now to express myself with precision. The grit and energy of some men are called

forth by the resistance of the world. But as for myself, I seem to have no spirit whatever of that kind, no pride which makes me ashamed to say, "I can't do that." But I have a mental pride and shame which, although they seem more egotistical than the other kind, are still the only things that can stir my blood. These lines seem to satisfy me, although to many they would appear the height of indolence and contemptibleness: "Ne forçons point notre talent,— Nous ne ferions rien avec grâce,— Jamais un lourdaud, quoi-qu'il fasse,— Ne deviendra un galant." Now all the time I should be gone on this expedition I should have a pining after books and study as I have had hitherto, and a feeling that this work was not in my path and was so much waste of life. I had misgivings to this effect before starting; but I was so filled with enthusiasm, and the romance of the thing seemed so great, that I stifled them. Here on the ground the romance vanishes and the misgivings float up. I have determined to listen to them this time. I said that my act was an expensive mistake as regards what I anticipated, but I have got this other *edification* from it. It has to be got some time, and perhaps only through some great mistake; for there are some familiar axioms which the individual only seems able to learn the meaning of through his individual experience. I don't know whether I have expressed myself so as to let you understand exactly how I feel. O my dear, affectionate, wise old Father, how I longed to see you while I lay there with the small-pox,<sup>1</sup> first revolving these things over! and how I longed to confer with you in a more confiding way than I often do at home! When

<sup>1</sup> The case of small-pox left no scar whatever. Indeed James afterward regarded it as having been perhaps no small-pox at all, but only varioloid, and by October he described himself as being in better health than ever before. During several weeks of convalescence that followed his distressing experience in quarantine he was, however, quite naturally, "blue and despondent."

I get there I can explain the gaps. As this letter does not sail till next Saturday (this is Sunday), I will stop for the present, as I feel quite tired out. . . .

It was not feasible for James to leave the expedition and return home immediately, and soon after the last letter was written, his returning health and eyesight brought with them a more cheerful mood. He determined to stay in Brazil for a few months longer.

*To his Father.*

RIVER SOLIMÕES (AMAZON),

Sept. 12-15, 1865.

MY DEAREST DADDY,—Great was my joy the other evening, on arriving at Manaus, to get a batch of letters from you. . . . I could do no more then than merely “accuse” the reception. Now I can manage to sweat out a few lines of reply. It is noon and the heat is frightful. We have all come to the conclusion that, for *us* at least, there will be no hell hereafter. We have all become regular alembics, and the heat grows upon you, I find. Nevertheless it is not the dead, sickening heat of home. It is more like a lively baking, and the nights remain cool. We are just entering on the mosquito country, and I suspect our suffering will be great from them and the flies. While the steamboat is in motion we don’t have them, but when she stops you can hardly open your mouth without getting it full of them. Poor Mr. Bourkhardt is awfully poisoned and swollen up by bites he got ten days ago on a bayou. At the same time with the mosquitoés, the other living things seem to increase; so it has its good side. The river is much narrower — about two miles wide perhaps or three (I’m no judge) — very darkly muddy and swirling rapidly down past the beautiful

woods and islands. We are all going up as far as Tabatinga, when the Professor and Madam, with some others, go into Peru to the Mountains, while Bourget and I will get a canoe and some men and spend a month on the river between Tabatinga and Ega. Bourget is a very dog, yapping and yelping at every one, but a very hard-working collector, and I can get along very well with him. We shall have a very gypsy-like, if a very uncomfortable time. The best of this river is that you can't bathe in it on account of the numerous anthropophagous fishes who bite mouthfuls out of you. Tom Ward *may* possibly be out and at Manaus by the time we get back there at the end of October. Heaven grant he may, poor fellow! I'd rather see him than any one on this continent. Agassiz is perfectly delighted with him, his intelligence and his energy, thinks him in fact much the best man of the expedition.

I see no reason to regret my determination to stay. "On contrary," as Agassiz says, as I begin to use my eyes a little every day, I feel like an entirely new being. Everything revives within and without, and I now feel sure that I shall learn. I have profited a great deal by hearing Agassiz talk, not so much by what he says, for never did a man utter a greater amount of humbug, but by learning the way of feeling of such a vast practical engine as he is. No one sees farther into a generalization than his own knowledge of details extends, and you have a greater feeling of weight and solidity about the movement of Agassiz's mind, owing to the continual presence of this great background of special facts, than about the mind of any other man I know. He has a great personal tact too, and I see that in all his talks with me he is pitching into my loose and superficial way of thinking. . . . Now that I am become more intimate with him, and can talk more freely to him, I delight

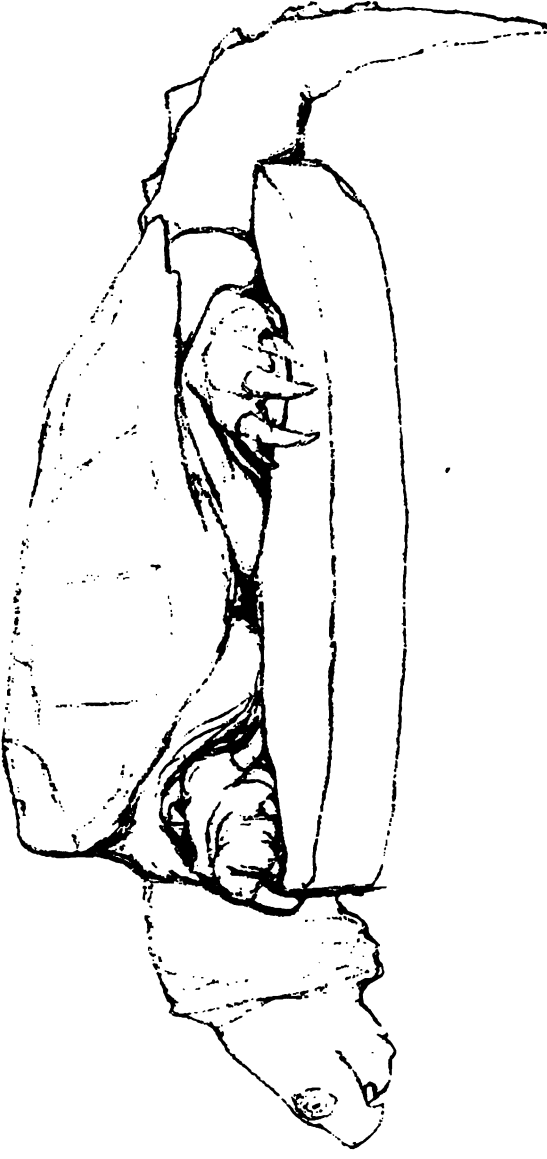


to be with him. I only saw his defects at first, but now his wonderful qualities throw them quite in the background. I am convinced that he is the man to do me good. He will certainly have earned a holiday when he gets home. I never saw a man work so hard. Physically, intellectually and socially he has done the work of ten different men since he has been in Brazil; the only danger is of his overdoing it. . . .

I am beginning to get impatient with the Brazilian sleepiness and ignorance. These Indians are particularly exasperating by their laziness and stolidity. It would be amusing if it were not so infuriating to see how impossible it is to make one hurry, no matter how imminent the emergency. How queer and how exhilarating all those home letters were, with their accounts of what every one was doing, doing, doing. To me, just awakening from my life of forced idleness and from an atmosphere of Brazilian inanity, it seemed as if a little window had been opened and a life-giving blast of one of our October nor'westers had blown into my lungs for half an hour. I had no idea before of the real greatness of American energy. They wood up the steamer here for instance at the rate (accurately counted) of eight to twelve logs a minute. It takes them two and one-half hours to put in as much wood as would go in at home in less than fifteen minutes.

Every note from home makes me proud of our country. . . . I have not been able to look at the papers, but I have heard a good deal. I do hope our people will not be such fools as to hang Jeff. Davis for treason. Can any one believe in revenge now? And if not for that, for what else should we hang the poor wretch? Lincoln's violent death did more to endear him to those indifferent and unfriendly to him than the whole prosperous remainder of his life could

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A Pencil Sketch from a Pocket Note-Book.



have done; and so will Jeff's if he is hung. Poor old Abe! What is it that moves you so about his simple, unprejudiced, unpretending, honest career? I can't tell why, but albeit unused to the melting mood, I can hardly ever think of Abraham Lincoln without feeling on the point of blubbering. Is it that he seems the representative of pure simple human nature against all conventional additions? . . .

*To his Parents.*

TEFFÉ (AMAZON), Oct. 21, 1865.

. . . I left the party up at São Paulo the 20th of last month and got here the 16th of this, having gone up two rivers, the Içá and Jutay, and made collections of fishes which were very satisfactory to the Prof. as they contained almost one hundred new species. On the whole it was a most original month, and one which from its strangeness I shall remember to my dying day; much discomfort from insects and rain, much ecstasy from the lovely landscape, much hard work and heat, a very disagreeable companion, J — [added to the party in Brazil], the very best of fare, turtle and fresh fish every day, and running through all a delightful savor of freedom and gypsy-hood which sweetened all that might have been unpleasant. We slept on the beaches every night and fraternized with the Indians, who are socially very agreeable, but mentally a most barren people. I suppose they are the most exclusively practical race in the world. When I get home I shall bore you with all kinds of stories about them. I found the rest of the party at this most beautiful little place in a wonderful picturesque house. It was right pleasant to meet them again. The Prof. has been working himself out and is thin and nervous. That good woman, Mrs. Agassiz, is perfectly well. The boys, poor fellows, have all their legs in an awful con-

dition from a kind of mite called "muguim" which gets under the skin and makes dreadful sores. You can't walk in the woods without getting them on you, and poor Hunney [Hunnewell] is ulcerated very badly. They have no mosquitoes though here.

Since last night we have had everything packed — our packing-work, its volume, its dirtyness, and its misery is wonderful. Twenty-nine full barrels of specimens from here, and hardly one tight barrel among them. The burly execrations of the burly Dexter when at the cooper's work would make your hair shiver. But when a good barrel presents itself, then the calm joy almost makes amends for the past. Dexter says he has the same feeling for a decent barrel that he has for a beautiful woman. When the steamer comes we are going down to Manaos, where we expect the gunboat which the government has promised the Prof. Dexter and Tal go up the Rio Negro for a month. The rest of us are going to the Madeira River in the steamer. I don't know what I shall do exactly, but there will probably be some canoeing to be done, in which case I'm ready; tho' the rainy season is beginning, which makes canoe traveling very uncomfortable. We shall be at Pará by the middle of December certainly. I am very anxious to learn whether the New York and Brazilian steamers are to run. We may learn at Manaos, where there is also a chance for letters for us, and American papers. Why can't you send the "North American," with Father's and Harry's articles? It would be worth any price to me.

*22nd Oct.*

On board the old homestead, viz., Steamer Icamiba. The only haven of rest we have in this country, and then only when she is in motion; for when we stop at a place, the Prof. is sure to come around and say how very desirable

it would be to get a large number of fishes from this place, and willy-nilly you must trudge. I wrote in my last letter something about the possibility of my wishing to go down South again with the Professor. I don't think there is any more probability of it than of my wishing to explore Central Africa. If there is anything I hate, it is collecting. I don't think it is suited to my genius at all; but for that very reason this little exercise in it I am having here is the better for me. I am getting to be very practical, orderly, and businesslike. That fine disorder which used to prevail in my precincts, and which used to make Mother heave a beautiful sigh when she entered my room, is treated by the people with whom I am here as a heinous crime, and I feel very sensitive and ashamed about it. The 22nd of October! — what glorious weather you are having at home now, and how we should all like to be wound up by one day of it! I have often longed for a good, black, sour, sleety, sloshy winter's day in Washington Street. Oh, the bliss of standing on such a day half way between Roxbury and Boston and having all the horse-cars pass you full! It will be splendid to get home in mid-winter and revel in the cold.

I am delighted to hear how well Wilky is, and to hear from him. I wish Bob would write me a line — and only one letter from Alice in all this time — shame! Oh, the lovely white child! How the red man of the forest would like to hug her to his bosom once more! I proposed, beloved Alice, to write thee a long letter by this steamer describing my wonderful adventures with the wild Indians, and the tiger [jaguar?], and various details which interest thy lovely female mind; but I feel so darned heavy and seedy this morning that I cannot pump up the flow of words, and the letter goes on with the steamer from Manaos this evening. This expedition has been far less adventurous and far more

picturesque than I expected. I have not yet seen a single snake wild here. The adventure with the tiger consisted in his approaching to within 30 paces of our mosquito net, and roaring so as to wake us, and then keeping us awake most of the rest of the night by roaring far and near. I confess I felt some skeert, on being suddenly awoke by him, tho' when I had laid me down I had mocked the apprehensions of Tal about tigers. The adventure with the wild Indians consisted in our seeing two of them naked at a distance on the edge of the forest. On shouting to them in Lingoa Geral they ran away. It gave me a very peculiar and unexpected thrilling sensation to come thus suddenly upon these children of Nature. But I now tell you in confidence, my beloved white child, what you must not tell any of the rest of the family (for it would spoil the adventure), that we discovered a few hours later that these wild Indians were a couple of mulattoes belonging to another canoe, who had been in bathing.

I shall have to stop now. Do you still go to school at Miss Clapp's? For Heaven's sake write to me, Bal! Tell Harry if he sees [John] Bancroft to tell him Bourkhardt is much better, having found an Indian remedy of great efficacy. Please give my best love to the Tweedies, Temples, Washburns, La Farges, Paine, Childs, Elly Van Buren and in fact everybody who is in any way connected with me. Best of love to Aunt Kate, Wilk and Bob, Harry and all the family. I pine for Harry's literary *efforts* and to see a number or so of the "Nation." You can't send too many magazines or papers — Care of James B. Bond, Pará.

W. J.

## IV

1866-1867

### *Medical Studies at Harvard*

JAMES returned from Brazil in March, 1866, and immediately entered the Massachusetts General Hospital for a summer's service as undergraduate interne. In the autumn he left the Hospital and resumed his studies in the Harvard Medical School.

The Faculty of the School then included Dr. O. W. Holmes and Professor Jeffries Wyman. Charles Ed. Brown-Séquard was lecturing on the pathology of the nervous system. During the years of James's interrupted course a number of men attended the school who were to be his friends and colleagues for many years thereafter — among them William G. Farlow, subsequently Professor of Cryptogamic Botany and a Cambridge neighbor for forty years, and Charles P. Putnam and James J. Putnam — two brothers in whose company he was later to spend many Adirondack vacations and to whom he became warmly attached. Henry P. Bowditch, whose instinct for physiological inquiry was already vigorous, and who was destined to become a leader of research in America, and the teacher and inspirer of a generation of younger investigators, was another Medical School contemporary with whom he formed an enduring friendship.

The instruction given in the Harvard Medical School in the sixties was as good as any obtainable in America, but it fell short of what is nowadays reckoned as essential for a medical education to an extent that none but a modern student of medicine can understand. The emphasis was



still on lectures, demonstrations and reading, and the pupil's rôle was an almost completely passive one. James, according to the testimony of one of his classmates, made a solitary exception to the practice of the class by attempting to keep a graphic record of his microscopic studies in histology and pathology. When questioned about this long after, he admitted that he believed himself to have been the only student of his time in the Medical School who took the trouble to make drawings from the microscopic field with regularity.

The teaching of Pasteur and Lister had not then revolutionized medicine. Modern bacteriology and the possibilities of aseptic surgery were yet to be understood. Surgeons who operated in the amphitheatre of the Massachusetts General Hospital could still take pride in appearing in blood-soiled gowns, much as a fisherman scorns a brand-new outfit and sports his weather-rusted old clothes. The demonstrations of even Dr. Henry J. Bigelow, a skillful operator who was then a leader in his profession, filled James with a horror which he never forgot.

On the other hand, the discovery of anesthesia, which made possible an enlarged and humane use of animals for experimental inquiry, and such illuminating reports and investigations as those of Claude Bernard, Helmholtz, Virchow and Ludwig were giving a great impetus to the investigation of bodily processes and functions, and a study of these was a possible next step in James's evolution. He had already been unusually well grounded in comparative anatomy by Agassiz and Jeffries Wyman. He was gravitating surely, even if he did not yet realize it clearly, toward philosophy. Whenever he more or less consciously projected himself forward, it must have seemed to him that the examination of processes in the living body, for which he was al-

ready prepared, might be related, in an enlightening way, to the philosophic pursuits that were beginning to invite him. Physiology therefore commanded both his respect and his curiosity, and he turned in that direction rather than toward what he then saw surgery and the practice of internal medicine to be.

During the winter of 1866-67 he lived with his parents in the house<sup>1</sup> in Quincy Street, Cambridge, in which they had settled themselves, and worked regularly at the Medical School. He had come back from the year of mere animal existence on the Amazon in excellent physical condition.

Of the four letters which follow, two were written to Thomas W. Ward, who, it will be remembered, had been a member of the Amazon Expedition, and who, after getting back to New York, had entered the great Baring banking house of which his father, Samuel Ward, was the American partner. O. W. Holmes, Jr., will be recognized as the present Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. In no one did James find more sympathetic philosophic companionship at this period.

*To Thomas W. Ward.*

Boston, Mar. 27, 1866.

MEO CARO COMPADRE,—I have been intending to write you every night for the last month, but the strange epistolary inertia which always weighs down upon me has kept me from it until now. I have had news of you two or three times from my father having met yours, and from Dexter, who said he had met you in New York. I am very curious to know how you find your occupation to suit you, and if you find the dust of daily drudgery to obscure at all the visions of your far-off-future power. From what Dexter

<sup>1</sup> This house has since been enlarged and converted into the Colonial Club.

said I am afraid they do a little. We had given up Allen<sup>1</sup> as gone to the fishes; but the poor Devil arrived last week after a 98-days' passage!!! I never felt gladder for anything in my life. He had a horrible time at sea, being within 160 miles of New York and then blown back as far as St. Thomas. He says most of his collections arrived at Bahia spoiled by the sun. He was sixteen days crossing a limestone desert on which nothing grew but cacti; so there was no shade at noon, and the thermometer at 98°.♥ His health has been improved by the voyage, however, and he thinks it is better now than when he left for Brazil. Nevertheless he is going to give up natural history for the present and adopt some out-of-door life till he gets decidedly better, which he says he has been slowly but steadily doing for some years past. Poor Allen! None of us have been sold as badly as he. If I had not been to Brazil, I would go again to do what I have done, knowing beforehand what it would be. Allen says *he* would not, on any account.

I have been studying now for about two weeks, and think I shall be much more interested in it than before. It was some time before I could get settled down to reading. But now I do it quite naturally, and even *thinking* is beginning not to feel like a wholly abnormal process; all which, as you may imagine, is very agreeable — altho' I confess that as yet the philosophical *rouages* of my mind have not attained even to the degree of lubrication they had before I left. I shan't apologize for the egotistical pronoun, for I suppose, my dear old Thomas, that you will be interested to compare my experience since my return with yours, and learn something from it if possible — even as I would with yours. I spent the first month of my return in nothing but "social intercourse," having the two Temple girls and Elly

<sup>1</sup> John A. Allen, another of the Brazilian party.

Van Buren in the house for a fortnight, and being obliged to escort them about to parties, etc., nearly every night. The consequences were a falling in love with every girl I met — succeeded now by a reaction which makes me, and will make me for a long time, decline every invitation. I feel now somehow as if I had settled down upon a steady track that I shall not have much temptation to slip off of, for a good many months at any rate. I am conscious of a desire I never had before so strongly or so permanently, of narrowing and deepening the channel of my intellectual activity, of economizing my feeble energies and consequently treating with more *respect* the few things I shall devote them to. This temper may be a transient one; mais pour peu qu'il dure un an ou deux, to fix the shorter term! I'm sure it will give a tone to my mind it lacked before. As for the disrespect with which you treat the worthy problems that you turn your back upon, I don't see now exactly how you get over that; but something tells me that, practically, my salvation depends for the present on following some such plan. And, I am sure that, in the majority of men at any rate, the process of growing into a calm mental state is not one of leveling, but of going around, difficulties. The problem they solve is not one of being, but of method. They reach a point from which the view within certain limits is harmonious, and they keep within those limits; they find as it were a centre of oscillation in which they may be at rest. Now whether any other kind of solution is possible, I don't know. Many men will say not; but I feel somehow, now, as if I had no right to an opinion on any subject, no right to open my mouth before others until I know some *one* thing as thoroughly as it can be known, no matter how insignificant it may be. After that I shall perhaps be able to think on general subjects.— The only fellow here I care

anything about is Holmes, who is on the whole a first-rate article, and one which improves by wear. He is perhaps too exclusively intellectual, but sees things so easily and clearly and talks so admirably that it's a treat to be with him. T. S. Perry is also flourishing in health and spirits. Ed[ward] Emerson I have not yet seen. I made the acquaintance the other day of Miss Fanny Dixwell of Cambridge (the eldest), do you know her? She is decidedly A1, and (so far) the best girl I have known. I should like if possible to confine my whole life to her, Ellen Hooper, Sara Sedgwick,<sup>1</sup> Holmes, Harry, and the Medical School, for an indefinite period, letting no breath of extraneous air enter.

There, I hope that's a confession of faith. I wish you would write me a similar or even more "developed" one, for I really want to know how the building up into flesh and blood of the wide-sweeping plans that the solitudes of Brazil gave birth to seems to alter them. Write soon, and I'll answer soon; for I think, Chéri de Thomas, que ce doux commerce que nous avons mené tant d'années ought not all of a sudden to die out. I'd give a great deal to see you, but see no prospect of getting to New York for a long time. Our family spends six months at Swampscott from the first of May. I shall have a room in town. What chance is there of your being able to pay us a visit at Swampscott in my vacation (from July 15 to Sept. 15)? Ever your friend

WM. JAMES.

*To Thomas W. Ward.*

Boston, June 8, 1866.

CHÉRI DE THOMAS,—I cannot exactly say I *hasten* to reply to your letter. I have thought of you about every

<sup>1</sup> Miss Dixwell became Mrs. O. W. Holmes; the other two, Mrs. E. W. Gurney and Mrs. William E. Darwin respectively.

day since I received it, and given you a Brazilian hug therewith, and wanted to write to you; but having been in a pretty unsettled theoretical condition myself, from which I hoped some positive conclusions might emerge worthy to be presented to you as the last word on the Kosmos and the human soul, I deferred writing from day to day, thinking that better than to offer you the crude and premature spawning of my intelligence. In vain! the conclusions never have emerged, and I see that, if I am *ever* to write you, I must do it on the spur of the moment, with all my dullness thick upon me.

I have just read your letter over again, and am grieved afresh at your melancholy tone about yourself. You ask why I am quiet, while you are so restless. Partly from the original constitution of things, I suppose; partly because I am less quiet than you suppose; only I once heard a proverb about a man consuming his own smoke, and I do so particularly in your presence because you, being so much more turbid, produce a reaction in me; partly because I am a few years older than you, and have not solved, but grown callous (I hear your sneer) to, many of the problems that now torture you. The *chief* reason is the original constitution of things, which generated me with fewer sympathies and wants than you, and also perhaps with a certain tranquil confidence in the right ordering of the Whole, which makes me indifferent in some circumstances where you would fret. Yours the nobler, mine the happier part! I *think*, too, that much of your uneasiness comes from that to which you allude in your letter — your oscillatoriness, and your regarding each oscillation as something final as long as it lasts. There is nothing more certain than that every man's life (except perhaps Harry Quincy's) is a line that continuously oscillates on every side of its direc-

tion; and if you would be more confident that any state of tension you may at any time find yourself in will inevitably relieve *itself*, sooner or later, you would spare yourself much anxiety. I myself have felt in the last six months more and more certain that each man's constitution limits him to a certain amount of emotion and action, and that, if he insists on going under a higher pressure than normal for three months, for instance, he will pay for it by passing the next three months below par. So the best way is to keep moving steadily and regularly, as your mind becomes thus deliciously appeased (as you imagine mine to be; ah! Tom, what damned fools we are!). If you feel below par now, don't think your life is deserting you forever. You are just as sure to be up again as you are, when elated, sure to be down again. Six months, or any given cycle of time, is sure to see you produce a certain amount, and your fretful anxiety when in a stagnant mood is frivolous. The good time will come again, as it has come; and go too. I think we ought to be independent of our moods, look on them as external, for they come to us unbidden, and feel if possible neither elated nor depressed, but keep our eyes upon our work and, if we have done the best we could *in that given condition*, be satisfied.

I don't know whether all this solemn wisdom of mine seems to you anything better than conceited irrelevance. I began the other day to read the thoughts of Marcus Aurelius, translated by Long, published by Ticknor, which, if you have not read, I advise you to read, slowly. I only read two or three pages a day, and am only half through the book. He certainly had an invincible soul; and it seems to me that any man who can, like him, grasp the love of a "life according to nature," *i.e.*, a life in which your individual will becomes so harmonized to nature's will as cheerfully to

acquiesce in whatever she assigns to you, knowing that you serve *some* purpose in her vast machinery which will never be revealed to you—any man who can do this will, I say, be a pleasing spectacle, no matter what his lot in life. I think old Mark's perpetual yearnings for patience and equanimity and kindliness would do your heart good.—I have come to feel lately, more and more (I can't tell though whether it will be permanent) like paying my footing in the world in a very humble way, (driving my physicking trade like any other tenth-rate man), and then living my free life in my leisure hours entirely within my own breast as a thing the world has nothing to do with; and living it easily and patiently, without feeling responsible for its future.

I will now, my dear old Tom, stop my crudities. Although these notions and others have of late led me to a pretty practical contentment, I cannot help feeling as if I were insulting Heaven by offering them about as if they had an absolute worth. Still, as I am willing to take them all back whenever it seems right, you will excuse my apparent conceit. Besides, they may suggest some practical point of view to you.

The family is at Swampscott. I have a room in Bowdoin Street for the secular part of the week. We have a very nice house in Swampscott. . . . I am anxiously waiting your arrival on Class Day. I expect you to spend all your time with me either here or in Swampscott, when we shall, I trust, patch up the Kosmos satisfactorily and rescue it from its present fragmentary condition. . . .

*To his Sister.*

CAMBRIDGE, Nov. 14, 1866.

CHÉRIE DE JEUNE BALLE,—I am just in from town in the keen, cold and eke beauteous moonlight, which by the



above qualities makes me think of thee, to whom, nor to whose aunt, have I (not) yet written. (I don't understand the grammar of the not.)

Your first question is, "where have I been?" "To C. S. Peirce's lecture, which I could not understand a word of, but rather enjoyed the sensation of listening to for an hour." I then turned to O. W. Holmes's and wrangled with him for another hour.

You may thank your stars that you are not in a place where you have to ride in such full horse-cars as these. I rode half way out with my "form" entirely out of the car overhanging the road, my feet alone being on the same vertical line as any part of the car, there being just room for them on the step. Aunt Kate may, and probably *will*, have shoot through her prolific mind the supposish: "How wrong in him to do sich! for if, while in that posish, he should have a sudden stroke of paralysis, or faint, his nerveless fingers relaxing their grasp of the rail, he would fall prostrate to the ground and bust." To which I reply that, when I go so far as to have a stroke of paralysis, I shall not mind going a step farther and getting bruised.

Your next question probably is "*how* are and *where* are father and mother?". . . I think father seems more lively for a few days past and cracks jokes with Harry, etc. Mother is recovering from one of her indispositions, which she bears like an angel, doing any amount of work at the same time, putting up cornices and raking out the garret-room like a little buffalo.

Your next question is "wherever is Harry?" I answer: "He is to Ashburner's, to a tea-squall in favor of Miss Haggerty." I declined. He is well. We have had nothing but invitations (6) in 3 or 4 days. One, a painted one, from "Mrs. L——," whoever she may be. I replied that

domestic affliction prevented me from going, but I would take a pecuniary equivalent instead, viz: To 1 oyster stew 30 cts., 1 chicken salad 0.50, 1 roll 0.02, 3 ice creams at 20 cts. 0.60, 6 small cakes at 0.05, 0.30, 1 pear \$1.50, 1 lb. confectionery 0.50.

6 glasses hock at 0.50	\$3.00
3 glasses sherry at 30	0.90
Salad spilt on floor	5.00
Dish of do., broken	3.00
Damage to carpet & Miss L——'s dress frm. do	75.00
3 glasses broken	1.20
Curtains set fire to in dressing-room	40.00
Other injury frm. fire in room	250.00
Injury to house frm. water pumped upon it by steam fire-engine come to put out fire	5000.00
Miscellaneous	0.35
	<hr/> 5300.00

I expect momentarily her reply with a check, and when it comes will take you and Aunt Kate on a tour in Europe and have you examined by the leading physicians and surgeons of that country. M—— L—— came out here and dined with us yesterday of her own accord. I no longer doubt what I always suspected, her *penchant* for me, and I don't blame her for it. Elly Temple staid here two days, too. She scratched, smote, beat, and kicked me so that I shall dread to meet her again. What an awful time Bob & Co. must have had at sea! and how anxious you must have been about them.

With best love to Aunt Kate and yourself believe me  
your af. bro.

WM. JAMES.

*To O. W. Holmes, Jr.*

[A pencil memorandum, Winter of 1866-67?]

Why I'm blest if I'm a Materialist:

The materialist posits an X for his ultimate principle.

Were he satisfied to inhabit this vacuous X, I should not at present try to disturb him.

But that atmosphere is too rare; so he spends all his time on the road between it and sensible realities, engaged in the laudable pursuit of degrading every (sensibly) higher thing into a (sensibly) lower. He thus accomplishes an immensely great positively conceived and felt result, and it availeth little to naturalize the sensible impression of this that he should at the end put in his little caveat that, after all, the low denomination is as unreal as the unreduced higher ones were. In the confession of ignorance is nothing which the mind can close upon and clutch — it's a vanishing negation; while the pretension of knowledge is full of positive, massively-felt contents. The former kicks the beam. What balm is it, when instead of my High you have given me a Low, to tell me that the Low is good for nothing?

If you take my \$1000 gold and give me greenbacks, I feel unreconciled still, even when you have assured me that the greenbacks are counterfeit. Or what comfort is it to me now to be told that a billion years hence greenbacks and gold will have the same value? especially when that is explained to be zero? How anyone can say that this pennyworth of negation can so balance these tons of affirmation as to make the naturalist *feel* like anyone else — I confess it's a mystery to me.

But as a man's happiness depends on his feeling, I think materialism inconsistent with a high degree thereof, and in this sense maintained that a materialist should not be

an optimist, using the latter word to signify one whose philosophy authenticates, by guaranteeing the objective significance of, his most pleasurable feelings.

You have transferred the question of optimism to a wider field, where I can't well follow it now. The term would have to be defined first, and then I think it would take me ten or twelve years of hard study to form any opinion as to the truth of your second premise.—I send the above remarks on "materialism," because they were what I was groping for the other evening, but could not say till you were gone and I in bed. To conclude:

*Corruptio optimistorum pessima!*



Pencil Sketch from a Pocket Note-Book.

## V

1867-1868

### *Eighteen Months in Germany*

IN the spring of 1867 James interrupted his course at the Medical School again. He was impelled to do this, partly by the pressure of a conviction that his health required him to stop work or continue elsewhere under different conditions, and partly by a desire to learn German and study physiology in the German laboratories. He knew a little German already, and it seemed reasonable to suppose that if he went abroad immediately he would have time to familiarize himself with the language during a pleasant and restful summer and would be ready to enter one of the universities in the autumn. He sailed in April and spent the summer in Dresden and Bohemia. But his health became worse instead of better.

It is unnecessary to detail the record of a long illness by selecting for this book the passages of his correspondence in which James sooner or later revealed what his condition was. It would also be idle to inquire closely about the causes of his illness, considering that, for one reason, James was completely puzzled and baffled himself. Insomnia, digestive disorders, eye-troubles, weakness of the back, and sometimes deep depression of spirits followed each other or afflicted him simultaneously. If his trouble was in part nervous, it was a reality none the less. A photograph that was taken of him at about this period recorded the aspect of a very ill man. If, his introspective genius made things worse for him for a while, it probably did more to

pull him through in the end than the — to our present-day understanding — harsh and unnecessary treatments, regimens, water-cures, courses of exercise, galvanisms, and blistering to which he subjected himself.

On the other hand, the illness which began in 1867, and which limited James's activities and occupations for several years, had another effect. It overtook him when he was only twenty-five years old, and threw him heavily upon his inner moral and intellectual resources. It caught him alone and among strangers, more or less prostrated him, and defeated his plans just at a time of life when he was beginning, with the eagerness of youth and philosophic genius combined, to reckon over each fresh experience into the terms of a possible answer to the riddles of life and death, predestination, freedom, and responsibility. It gave a personal intimacy and intensity to the deepest problems that philosophy and religion can present to man's understanding. This illness may perhaps have prevented James from becoming a physiological investigator. But clearly it developed and deepened the bed in which the stream of his philosophic life was to flow.

He sailed for Europe in April, and went almost directly to Dresden, where he found quarters in a *pension* presided over by an amiable Frau Spannenberg. He spent his mornings, and often his evenings, reading and studying German. He made an excursion to Bad-Teplitz in Bohemia, but the "cure" there did not greatly relieve his back, and the baths made him feel "as if his brain had been boiled,"<sup>1</sup> so he returned to Frau Spannenberg's. In the early autumn he moved to Berlin, attended a few lectures at the University there, and read a good deal on the physiology of

<sup>1</sup> Miss Kate Havens of Stamford, Conn., a fellow *pensionnaire* at Frau Spannenberg's, has kindly supplied a helpful memorandum.

the nervous system; but he was unable to work in the laboratories, and found it expedient to return to Teplitz at the end of January (1868). What he did thereafter will appear as the letters proceed.

*To his Parents.*

DRESDEN, May 27, 1867.

. . . Though I have been just a little over two weeks settled in Dresden, I hardly know anything about it or about Germany yet. Nothing but confused, vague and probably erroneous impressions of the people, owing chiefly to my imperfect knowledge of the language. In the first place there is not the slightest touch of the romantic, picturesque, or even *foreign* about living here. I think there is very little absolutely in the place to give such impressions, and I think I have outgrown my old susceptibility to them. Whereas in old times I used to notice every window, door-handle and smell as having a peculiar and exotic charm, every old street and house as filled with historic life and mystery, they are now to me streets and houses and nothing more. The hey-day of youth is o'er! Alack the day! My traveling has been accompanied with hardly more astonishment or excitement than would accompany a journey to Chicago. . . .

The place which has most invited me to live in it is Strasburg. The people all speak both French and German, each with the other's accent, and the environs are ravishing. The Saxons are a very short and ill-favored race, both sexes, not light-haired as the Rhinelanders, and most eccentrically toothed. Many of the young officers, however, are very good-looking fellows. The poor people wear old greasy caps and black coats, and no collars, but black cravats as in England, and look very ugly. The great number of *old* men and women here has struck me very much. Can it



William James at twenty-five.

From a Photograph





be that we have so few at home? or do we keep them indoors? Or do the Germans show their age so much sooner? I know not. The Americans I have met have been a poor crowd. The English I have seen have been distinguished by their pure and clean appearance, and by an awkwardness which in a certain way appeals to your sympathies. They have the faculty of *blushing* which is denied to the French and comparatively to the Germans, and in spite of all my prejudices I feel more akin to them than to the others.

I have, since I wrote my last letter, led a perfectly monotonous life. Read all the morning, go out for a walk and a lounge in a concert garden in the afternoon, and read after tea. I am quite well satisfied with my progress in the noble German tongue, which has been steady, although, since the first day I wrote to you about [it], not brilliant. Its difficulties are I think quite unjustifiably great for a modern language — it is in fact without *any* of the modern improvements. I read the little newspapers, which Dr. Semler takes, carefully from beginning to end; and what with the other newspapers I see at a reading-room, the talk I hear, and a little other reading, I have a quite vague and confused but very wonderful impression of the strange difference between the whole German way of thinking and ours; and in my as yet crude fancy it seems to be connected with the grammatical structure of the sentences and the endless power of making new words by combination. I have just been reading Hegel's chapter on epic poetry in his "Aesthetik," and [the] truly monstrous sentences therein were quite a revelation to me. It seems to me that the expression corresponds much more closely to the spontaneous and impromptu mode of thought than in our Latinized tongues — that the language allows and invites speculation and expatiation without limit. As soon as the first

glimmering of an idea has dawned upon you, there is no reason why you should not begin to inscribe, for you can wallow round and round as you proceed, affixing limitations, lugging in definitions and explanations as fast as they suggest each other, and need never go back to reshape your beginning. While with us you will, as a rule, come to grief if you begin your sentence without a pretty distinct idea of what the whole is going to be. Then the endless power of word-multiplication by composition, and of making adjectives of whole phrases must allow you to *fix*, and to fix in a most homely, pregnant form, a host of evanescent shades of meaning (most of which would with us be lost), as fast as they flash upon the mind. And from these successive approximations the final form of the thought may be more easily and surely distilled than if it had to be all formed in one's head before it could get even an approximate expression.

However, I don't pretend to say that these hasty impressions are correct. They may be the mere creations of a dis-tempered fancy. At any rate, I am sure that German is the native tongue of all Wilky-isms, and that in Germany [Wilky] would be one of the first authors of the age for style. The mischief of it is that, instead of using these approximations as such, the people let them stand permanently, and as they can make them with so little trouble, there arises in literature and talk an entangled mass of crudity and barbarism that spoils everything. They get accustomed to such elephantine ways of saying things that they don't mind it at all, and I have had more amusement out of the newspaper than I ever derived from the text of "Punch." I wish I could remember some of the expressions. Yesterday, for instance, the paper said the Emperor of Austria's message was more *atomistisch* than *dynamisch* — this, in a peppery little political article, shows what schol-

astic expressions the people are accustomed to. The context gave no explanation. Then, a couple of days ago, in a review of some histories of German literature, the surprising depth of one author was praised, altho' it was granted "that *here and there* he had not succeeded in lighting up the ultimate life-spring (*Lebensgrund*) of the phenomena." Of another that "*without entirely losing sight of what was human (menschlich)* in the phenomena, he had accomplished a work of extraordinarily logical development and luminous procedure (*Gang*)."  
Imagine entirely leaving out the human in a history of *literature!* . . .

May 30.

The pleasant spinster from Hamburg I mentioned in my last letter as being so well read, has, I find, "drawn the line" of her information at geography and physical science. She comes out strong in Sanscrit and Greek literature (which she knows of course by translations), and in church history, but she drives me frantic by her endless talking about America, in the course of which she continually leaps without any warning from New York to Rio de Janeiro and thence to Valparaiso. She has friends in each of these localities, and it is apparently a fixed conviction of hers that they take tea together every evening. At first I tried to show her that these places were all far apart and that the ways of one were not those of the others, and from her apparent comprehension and submission I used to fancy I had succeeded; but it was only the elastic and transient bowing of the reed before the gale. A rather amusing incident occurred the other evening. I was speaking of the different classes of people that made up our population, and endeavoring to give a keen analysis of the Irish character, when she asked me to tell her something about a people we had with us called "Yankees," about whom she had heard

such strange stories, and who seemed to be, if report were true, of all the peoples in the world the very worst (*das allerschlimmste*). What was their genesis and what were they? Imagine the feelings of the poor old lady, who had asked the question merely from a wish to please me by her intelligent interest in our affairs, when the truth was told her. . . .

The other afternoon I fell into conversation with a tall and rather aristocratic-looking old gentleman with a gray moustache, who spoke very good French, at a beer garden, and found out afterwards that he was no less a person than the illustrious Kaulbach. Strangely enough, we quite accidentally got on the subject of the Gallery. He spoke of several of the pictures, but said nothing that was not commonplace. I have as yet only had a mere glimpse at the Gallery, but will do it thoroughly before I leave. I'd give anything if Harry could see some of the Venetian things there, and the Shepherds' Adoration of Correggio, which he probably knows, or rather *méconnait*, by prints which give nought but the rather unpleasant and, unless you are let into the secret, motivelessly eccentric drawing. But it would take Victor Hugo to find the proper antithetic epithets to describe the combined gladness and solemnity of the painting, its innocence and its depth. I have always had, I don't know why, a prejudice against Correggio; but I never saw a painting before that breathed out so easily such a moral poetry. It seems to me to kill Rafael's celebrated Madonna right out. Although that too is a good "piece." I find myself in the Gallery much too disposed to exalt one thing at the expense of its neighbors, which is very unjust to them; but by taking it easily and letting the pictures do their own work I think it will all come right. Mr. Paul Veronese had *eyes*, anyhow. I am sure it would

be the making of John La Farge to come abroad, alone, if no other way. Dis lui, Henry, que je lui écrirai tantôt à ce sujet.

I have been having a literary debauch to start in the language with, but am getting down again to medicine. The enthusiastic, oratorical and eloquent Schiller, the wise and exquisite Goethe, and the virile and human Lessing have in turn held me entranced by their *Dramal*. Je te recommande, Henry, "Emilia Galotti" comme étude. C'est serré comme du chêne, rapide comme l'avalanche, toute la retenue et la vigueur de Merimée, et au fond un gros cœur dont la tendresse comprimée n'échappe que par des phrases dont la sobriété même déchire, ou bien par du bitter irony. Lessing seems to have a religious feeling that people miss in Goethe, and seems to be a great deal deeper than Schiller, though, of course, he is a far more homespun character. I have been reading Goethe's "Italienische Reise." It is perfectly fascinating; but you can read very little of it at a time, it is so damnably tedious, and you can't bear to skip. Paradoxical as it may appear, there is a deal of *naïveté* in the old cuss. Attends donc un peu que mon grand article sur Goethe apparaisse dans "L'Américain du Nord!"

I expect T. S. Perry here in a fortnight on his way from Venice. You may imagine with what joy. I have just been interrupted by the supper, which takes place at nine P.M. and consists of beer, eggs, herrings, ham, and bread and butter, and is not displeasing to the carnal man. I have been writing a most infernally long letter, for which I apologize. It will be the last time. The fact is I have so few resources here that I am driven to write. Tell Alice that there are two Miss Twomblys from Boylston Street living here, one exceedingly pretty. She doubtless, by her

feminine system of espionage, knows who they are, though I know none of their friends and they none of mine. I got mother's letter and the "Nation" with great joy soon after my arrival. I read Father's article, but with much the old result. I am desirous of reading his article in the N. A. R. and hope he will not delay to send it when it appears. Heaps of love all round.

*To his Mother.*

DRESDEN, *June 12, 1867.*

DEAREST MOTHER,— I have been reading a considerable deal of German, and in a very desultory way, as I want to get accustomed to a variety of styles, so as to be able to read any book at sight, skipping the useless; and I may say that I now begin to have that power whenever the book is writ in a style at all adapted to the requirements of the human, as distinguished from the German, mind. The profounder and more philosophical German requires, however, that you should bring all the resources of your nature, of every kind, to a focus, and hurl them again and again on the sentence, till at last you feel something give way, as it were, and the Idea begins to unravel itself. As for speaking, that is a very different matter and advances much more slowly. . . .

Life is so monotonous in this place that unless I make some philosophical discoveries, or unless *something* happens, my letters will have to be both few and short. I get up and have breakfast, which means a big cup of cocoa and some bread and butter with an egg, if I want it, at eight. I read till half-past one, when dinner, which is generally quite a decent meal; after dinner a nap, more *Germanorum* and more read till the sun gets low enough to go out, when out I go — generally to the Grosser Garten, a lovely park

outside the town where the sun slants over the greenest meadows and sends his shafts between the great trees in a most wholesome manner. There are some spots where the trees are close together, and in their classic gloom you find mossy statues, so that you feel as if you belonged to the last century. Often I go and sit on a terrace which overlooks the Elbe and, with my eyes bent upon the lordly cliffs far down the river on the other side, with strains of the sweetest music in my ear, and with pint after pint of beer successively finding their way into the fastnesses of my interior, I enjoy most delightful reveries, *au nombre desquels* those concerning my home and my sister are not the least frequent.

In the house (which stands on a corner) my great resource when time hangs heavy on my hands is to sit in the window and examine my neighbors. The houses are all four stories high and composed of separate flats, as in Paris. I live in the 3me. Diagonally opposite is a young ladies' boarding-school where the *young* ladies, very young they are, are wont to relax from their studies by kissing their hands, etc., etc., etc., to a young English lout, who has been here in the house, and myself. Said lout left for England yesterday, for which I heartily thank him, and I shall now monopolize the attention of the school. We rather *had* them, for we had a telescope to observe them by. Not one was good-looking. There has, however, lately arisen in the Christian Strasse, just under my window, a most ravishing apparition, and I begin to think my heart will not wither wholly away. About eighteen, hair like night, and *such* eyes! Their mute-appealing, love-lorn look goes through and through me. Every day for the last week, after dinner, have I sat in my window and she in hers. I with the telescope! she with those eyes! and we communing



with each other!! I will try to make a likeness of her and send with this letter, but I may not succeed.<sup>1</sup> She has only one defect, which is the length of her nose. If that were only an inch and a half shorter, I should propose at once to her Mother for it; but religious difference might intervene, so it is better as it is.

I am expecting T. S. Perry any day now, you may imagine how impatiently. . . . Tell Harry I have been reading some essays by Fr. Theod. Vischer, the *bedeutende Esthetiker*, on Strauss, on Goethe's "Faust" and its critics, etc., etc., which have much interested me. He is a splendid writer for style and matter — as brilliant as any of the non-absolutely-harlequin Frenchmen. The foundation of the thought is, or at least appears to be to my untutored mind, Hegelian; but they were published in 1844 and he may have changed. His "Aesthetik" henceforward appears in the list of "books which I must some day read." Some of the commentaries there quoted on "Faust" are incredibly monstrous for ponderous imbecility and seeing everything in the universe and out of it, except the point. I read this morning an Essay of Kuno Fischer's on Lessing's "Nathan" — one of the parasitic and analytic sort on the whole, but still very readable. The way these cusses slip so fluently off into the "Ideal," the "Jenseitige," the "Inner," etc., etc., and undertake to give a *logical* explanation of everything which is so palpably trumped up *after* the facts, and the reasoning of which is so grotesquely incapable of going an inch into the future, is both disgusting and disheartening. You never saw such a mania for going deep into the bowels of truth, with such an absolute lack of intuition and perception of the skin thereof. To hear the grass grow from morn

<sup>1</sup> An accompanying drawing presented a telescopic exaggeration of features, which are hardly appropriate to the Christian Strasse.



"The Ravishing Apparition in the Christian Strasse."



till night is their happy occupation. There is something that strikes me as corrupt, immodest in this incessant taste for explaining things in this mechanical way; but the era of it may be past now — I don't know. I speak only of æsthetic matters, of course. The political moment both here and in Austria is extremely interesting to one who has a political sense, and even I am beginning to have an opinion — and one all in favor of Prussia's victory and supremacy as a great practical stride towards civilization. I think the French tone in the last quarrel deserved a degrading and stinging humiliation as much as anything in history ever did, and I'm very sorry they did not get it. Of course there's no end of bunkum and inflation here, too, but it is practically a healthy thing. . . .

*To his Father.*

BERLIN, Sept. 5, 1867.

MY BELOVED OLD DAD,— . . . I think it will be just as well for you not to say anything to any of the others about what I shall tell you of my condition hitherto, as it will only give them useless pain, and poor Harry especially (who evidently from his letters runs much into that utterly useless emotion, sympathy, with me) had better remain ignorant. . . . My confinement to my room and inability to indulge in any social intercourse drove me necessarily into reading a great deal, which in my half-starved and weak condition was very bad for me, making me irritable and tremulous in a way I have never before experienced. Two evenings which I spent out, one at Gerlach's, the other at Thies's, aggravated my dorsal symptoms very much, and as I still clung to the hope of amelioration from repose, I avoided going out to the houses where it was possible. Although I cannot exactly say that I got low-spirited, yet

thoughts of the pistol, the dagger and the bowl began to usurp an unduly large part of my attention, and I began to think that some change, even if a hazardous one, was necessary. It was at that time that Dr. Carus advised Teplitz. While there, owing to the weakening effects of the baths, both back and stomach got worse if anything; but the beautiful country and a number of drives which I thought myself justified in taking made me happy as a king. . . . I have purposely hitherto written fallacious accounts of my state home, to produce a pleasant impression on you all — but you may rely on the present one as literally certain, and as it makes the others after all only *premature*, I don't see what will be the use of impairing the family confidence in my letters by saying anything about it to them. I have no doubt that you will consider the Teplitz expenditure justified, as I do. My sickness has added some other items in the way of medicine and cab hire to the expenses of my life in Dresden, but nothing *very* considerable. So much for biz.

I have read your article, which I got in Teplitz, several times carefully. I must confess that the darkness which to me has always hung over what you have written on these subjects is hardly at all cleared up. Every sentence seems written from a point of view which I nowhere get within range of, and on the other hand ignores all sorts of questions which are visible from my present view. My questions, I know, belong to the Understanding, and I suppose deal entirely with the "natural constitution" of things; but I find it impossible to step out from them into relation with "spiritual" facts, and the very language you use *ontologically* is also so extensively rooted in the finite and phenomenal that I cannot avoid accepting it as it were in its mechanical sense, when it becomes to me devoid of sig-



“A Contrast to the Ravishing Apparition.”  
(See reverse for fuller description.)

*William James to his Father.*

DRESDEN, *July* 10, 1867.

As a contrast to the portrait I sent you before, I send you a sketch of what I *now* see from my window. The poor old lady keeps her head for hours through that pane up on the roof, looking down into the street which she has probably trod for the last time. She never opens the whole window, I suppose for fear of too much fresh air getting in.

nificance. I feel myself in fact more and more drifting towards the sensationalism closed in by skepticism — but the skepticism will keep bursting out in the very midst of it, too, from time to time; so that I cannot help thinking I may one day get a glimpse of things through the ontological window. At present it is walled up. I can understand now no more than ever the world-wide gulf you put between “Head” and “Heart”; to me they are inextricably entangled together, and seem to grow from a common stem — and *no* theory of creation seems to me to make things clearer. I cannot logically understand *your* theory. You posit first a phenomenal Nature in which the *alienation* is produced (but phenomenal to *what?* to the already unconsciously existing creature?), and from this effected alienation a *real* movement of return follows. But how *can* the real movement have its rise in the phenomenal? And if it does not, it seems to me the creation is the very arbitrary one you inveigh against; and the whole process is a mere circle of the creator described within his own being and returning to the starting-point. I cannot understand what you mean by the descent of the creator into nature; you don’t explain it, and it seems to be the kernel of the whole.

You speak sometimes of our natural life as our whole conscious life; sometimes of our consciousness as composed of both elements, finite and infinite. If our *real* life is unconscious, I don’t see how you can occupy in the final result a different place from the Stoics, for instance. These are points on which I have never understood your position, and they will doubtless make you smile at my stupidity; but I cannot help it. I ought not to write about them in such a hurry, for I have been expecting every moment to see Tom Dwight come in, with whom I promised to go to



the theatre. I arrived here late last night. My back will prevent my studying physiology this winter at Leipsig, which I rather hoped to do. I shall stay here if I can. If unable to live here and cultivate the society of the natives without a greater moral and dorsal effort than my shattered frame will admit, I will retreat to Vienna where, knowing so many Americans, I shall find social relaxation without much expense of strength. Dwight has come. Much love from your affectionate,

WM. JAMES.

*To O. W. Holmes, Jr.*

BERLIN, Sept. 17, 1867.

MY DEAR WENDLE,—I was put in the possession, this morning, by a graceful and unusual attention on the part of the postman, of a letter from home containing, amongst other valuable matter, a precious specimen of manuscript signed "O. W. H. Jr." covering just one page of small note paper belonging to a letter written by Minny Temple!!!! Now I myself am not proud,—poverty, misery and philosophy have together brought me to a pass where there are few actions so shabby that I would not commit them if thereby I could relieve in any measure my estate, or lighten the trouble of living,—but, by Jove, Sir! there *is* a point, *sunt* certi denique fines, down to which it seems to me hardly worth while to condescend — better give up altogether.—I do not intend any personal application. Men differ, thank Heaven! and there may be some constituted in such a fearful and wonderful manner, that to write to a friend after six months, in another person's letter, hail him as "one of the pillars on which life rests," and after twelve lines stop short, seems to them an action replete with beauty and credit. To me it is otherwise. And if perchance, O

Wendy boy, there lurked in any cranny of *thy* breast a spark of consciousness, a germ of shame at the paltriness of thy procedure as thou inditedst that pitiful apology for a letter, I would fain fan it, nourish it, till thy whole being should become one incarnate blush, one crater of humiliation. Mind, I should not have found fault with you if you had not written at all. There would have been a fine brutality about that which would have commanded respect rather than otherwise — certainly not *pity*. 'Tis that, *writing*, THAT should be the result. Bah!

But I will change the subject, as I do not wish to provoke you to recrimination in your next letter. Let it be as substantial and succulent as the last, with its hollow hyperbolic expression of esteem, was the opposite, and I assure you that the past shall be forgotten.—I am, as you have probably been made aware, “a mere wreck,” bodily. I left home without telling anyone about it, because, hoping I might get well, I wanted to keep it a secret from Alice and the boys till it was over. I thought of telling you “in confidence,” but refrained, partly because walls have ears, partly from a morbid pride, mostly because of the habit of secrecy that had grown on me in six months. I dare say Harry has kept you supplied with information respecting my history up to the present time, and perhaps read you portions of my letters. My history, internal and external, since I have been in Germany, has been totally uneventful. The external, with the exception of three R. R. voyages (to and from Teplitz and to Berlin), resembles that of a sea anemone; and the internal, notwithstanding the stimulus of a new language and country, has contracted the same hue of stagnation. A tedious egotism seems to be the only mental plant that flourishes in sickness and solitude; and when the bodily condition is such that mus-

cular and cerebral activity not only remain *unexcited*, but are *solicited*, by an idiotic hope of recovery, to crass indolence, the "elasticity" of one's spirits can't be expected to be very great. Since I have been here I have admired Harry's pluck more and more. *Pain*, however intense, is light and life, compared to a condition where hibernation would be the ideal of conduct, and where your "conscience," in the form of an aspiration towards recovery, rebukes every tendency towards motion, excitement or life as a culpable excess. The deadness of spirit thereby produced "must be felt to be appreciated."

I have been in this city ten days and hope to stay all winter. I have got a comfortable room near the University and will attempt to follow some of the lectures. My wish was to study physiology practically, but I shall not be able. The number of subjects and fractions of subjects on which courses of lectures are given here and at the other universities would make you stare. Berlin is a "live" place, with a fine, tall, intelligent-looking population, infinitely better-looking than that of Dresden. I like the Germans very much, so far (which is not far at all) as I have got to know them. The apophthegm, "a fat man consequently a good man," has much of truth in it. The Germans come out strong on their abdomens,—even when these are not vast in capacity, one feels that they are of mighty powerful construction, and play a much weightier part in the economy of the man than with us,—affording a massive, immovable background to the consciousness, over which, as on the surface of a deep and tranquil sea, the motley images contributed by the other senses to life's drama glide and play without raising more than a pleasant ripple,—while with *us*, who have no such voluminous background, they forever touch bottom, or come out on the

other side, or kick up such a tempest and fury that we enjoy no repose. The Germans have leisure, kindness to strangers, a sort of square honesty, and an absence of false shame and damned pecuniary pretension that makes intercourse with them very agreeable. The language is infernal; and I seem to be making no progress beyond the stage in which one just begins to misunderstand and to make one's self misunderstood. The scientific literature is even richer than I thought. In literature proper, Goethe's "Faust" seems to me almost worth learning the language for.

I wish I could communicate to you some startling discoveries regarding our dilapidated old friend the Kosmos, made since I have been here. But I actually have n't had a fresh idea. And my reading until six weeks ago, having been all in German, covered very little ground. For the past six weeks I have, by medical order, been relaxing my brain on French fiction, and am just returning to the realities of life, German and Science. If you want to be consoled, refreshed, and reconciled to the Kosmos, the whole from a strictly abdominal point of view, read "L'Ami Fritz," and "Les Confessions d'un Joueur de Clarinette," etc., by Erckmann-Chatrian. They are books of gold, so don't read them till you are just in the mood and all other wisdom is of no avail. Then they will open the skies to you.

On looking back over this letter I perceive I have unwittingly been betrayed into a more gloomy tone than I intended, and than would convey a faithful impression of my usual mental condition — in which occur moments of keen enjoyment. The contemplation of my letter of credit alone makes me chuckle for hours. If I ever have leisure I will write an additional Bridgewater, illustrating the Beneficence

and Ingenuity, etc., in providing me with a letter of credit when so many poor devils have none. There, I have again unintentionally fallen into a vein of irony — I do not mean it. I am full of hope in the future.

My back, etc., are far better since I have been in Teplitz; in fact I feel like a new man. I have several excellent letters to people here, and when they return from the country, when T. S. Perry arrives for the winter, when the lectures get a-going, and I get thinking again, when long letters from you and the rest of my "*friends*" (ha! ha!) arrive regularly at short intervals— I shall mock the state of kings. You had better believe I have thought of you with affection at intervals since I have been away, and prized your qualities of head, heart, and person, and my priceless luck in possessing your confidence and friendship in a way I never did at home; and cursed myself that I did n't make more of you when I was by you, but, like the base Indian, threw evening after evening away which I might have spent in your bosom, sitting in your whitely-lit-up room, drinking in your profound wisdom, your golden jibes, your costly imagery, listening to your shuddering laughter, baptizing myself afresh, in short, in your friendship — the thought of all this makes me even now forget your epistolary peculiarities. But pray, my dear old Wendell, let me have *one* letter from you — tell me how your law business gets on, of your adventures, thoughts, discoveries (even though but of mares' nests, they will be interesting to your Williams); books read, good stories heard, girls fallen in love with — nothing can fail to please me, except your failing to write. Please give my love to John Gray, Jim Higginson and Henry Bowditch. Tell H. B. I will write to him very soon; but that is no reason why he should not write to me without waiting, and tell me about himself and medicine in Boston. Give my

very best regards also to your father, mother and sister.  
And believe me ever your friend,

WM. JAMES.

P. S. Why can't you write me the result of your study of the *vis viva* question? I have not thought of it since I left. I wish very much you would, if the trouble be not too great. Anyhow you could write the central formulas without explication, and oblige yours. Excuse the scrawliness of this too hurriedly written letter.

*To Henry James.*

BERLIN, *Sept.* 26, 1867.

BELoved 'ARRY,— I hope you will not be severely disappointed on opening this fat envelope to find it is not all *letter*. I will first explain to you the nature of the enclosed document and then proceed to personal matters. The other day, as I was sitting alone with my deeply breached letter of credit, beweeeping my outcast state, and wondering what I could possibly do for a living, it flashed across me that I might write a "notice" of H. Grimm's novel which I had just been reading. To conceive with me is to execute, as you well know. And after sweating fearfully for three days, erasing, tearing my hair, copying, recopying, etc., etc., I have just succeeded in finishing the enclosed. I want you to read it, and if, after correcting the style and thoughts, with the aid of Mother, Alice and Father, and rewriting it if possible, you judge it to be capable of interesting in any degree anyone in the world but H. Grimm, himself, to send it to the "Nation" or the "Round Table."

I feel that a living is hardly worth being gained at this price. Style is not my forte, and to strike the mean between pomposity and vulgar familiarity is indeed difficult. Still, an the rich guerdon accrue, an but ten beauteous dol-

lars lie down on their green and glossy backs within the family treasury in consequence of my exertions, I shall feel glad that I have made them. I have not seen Grimm yet as he is in Switzerland. In his writings he is possessed of real imagination and eloquence, chiefly in an ethical line, and the novel is really *distingué*, somewhat as Cherbuliez's are, only with rather a deficiency on the physical and animal side. He is, to my taste, too idealistic, and Father would scout him for his arrant moralism. Goethe seems to have mainly suckled him, and the manner of this book is precisely that of "Wilhelm Meister" or "Elective Affinities." There is something not exactly *robust* about him, but, *per contra*, great delicacy and an extreme belief in the existence and worth of truth and desire to attain it justly and impartially. In short, a rather painstaking liberality and want of careless animal spirits — which, by the bye, seem to be rather characteristics of the rising generation. But enough of him. The notice was mere taskwork. I could not get up a spark of interest in it, and I should not think it would be *d'actualité* for the "Nation." Still, I could think of nothing else to do, and was bound to do something.<sup>1</sup> . . .

I am a new man since I have been here, both from the ruddy hues of health which mantle on my back, and from the influence of this live city on my spirits. Dresden was a place in which it always seemed afternoon; and as I used to sit in my cool and darksome room, and see through the ancient window the long dusty sunbeams slanting past the roof angles opposite down into the deep well of a street, and hear the distant droning of the market and think of no reason why it should not thus continue *in secula seculorum*, I used to have the same sort of feeling as that which now comes

<sup>1</sup> The notice of Grimm's *Unüberwindliche Mächte* appeared under the title "A German-American Novel" in the *Nation*, 1867; vol. v, p. 432.

over me when I remember days passed in Grandma's old house in Albany. Here, on the other hand, it is just like home. Berlin, I suppose, is the most American-looking city in Europe. In the quarter which I inhabit, the streets are all at right angles, very broad, with dusty trees growing in them, houses all new and flat-roofed, covered with stucco, and of every imaginable irregularity in height, bleak, ugly, unsettled-looking — *werdend*. Germany is, I find, as a whole (I hardly think more experience will change my opinion), very nearly related to our country, and the German nature and ours so akin in fundamental qualities, that to come here is not much of an experience. There is a general colorlessness and bleakness about the outside look of life, and in artistic matters a wide-spread manifestation of the very same creative spirit that designs our kerosene-lamp models, for instance, at home. Nothing in short that is worth making a pilgrimage to see. To travel in Italy, in Egypt, or in the Tropics, may make creation widen to one's view; but to one of our race all that is *peculiar* in Germany is mental, and *that* Germany can be brought to us. . . .

(*After dinner.*) I have just been out to dine. I am gradually getting acquainted with all the different restaurants in the neighborhood, of which there are an endless number, and will presently choose one for good,— certainly not the one where I went today, where I paid 25 *Groschen* for a soup, chicken and potatoes, and was almost prevented from breathing by the damned condescension of the waiters. I fairly sigh for a home table. I used to find a rather pleasant excitement in dining "round," that is long since played out. Could I but find some of the honest, florid and ornate ministers that wait on you at the Parker House, here, I would stick to their establishment, no matter what the fare.

simple  
Ab - 1



These indifferent reptiles here, dressed in cast-off wedding-suits, insolent and disobliging and always trying to cheat you in the change, are the plague of my life. After dinner I took quite a long walk under the Linden and round by the Palace and Museum. There are great numbers of statues (a great many of them "equestrian") here, and you have no idea how they light up the place. What you say about the change of the seasons wakens an echo in my soul. Today is really a harbinger of winter, and felt like an October day at home, with a northwest wind, cold and crisp with a white light, and the red leaves falling and blowing everywhere. I expect T. S. Perry in a week. We shall have a very good large parlor and bedroom, *together*, in this house, and steer off in fine style right into the bowels of the winter. I expect it to be a stiff one, as everyone speaks of it here with a certain solemnity. . . .

I wish you would articulately display to me in your future letters the names of all the books you have been reading. "A great many books, none but good ones," is provokingly vague. On looking back at what *I* have read since I left home, it shows exceeding small, owing in great part I suppose to its being in German. I have just got settled down again — after a nearly-two-months' debauch on French fiction, during which time Mrs. Sand, the fresh, the bright, the free; the somewhat shrill but doughty Balzac, who has risen considerably in my esteem or rather in my affection; Théophile Gautier the good, the golden-mouthed, in turn captivated my attention; not to speak of the peerless Erckmann-Chatrian, who renews one's belief in the succulent harmonies of creation — and a host of others. I lately read Diderot, "Œuvres Choiesies," 2 vols., which are entertaining to the utmost from their animal spirits and the comic modes of thinking, speaking and behaving of the time.

Think of meeting continually such delicious sentences as this, — he is speaking of the educability of beasts,— “*Et peut on savoir jusqu’ou l’usage des mains porterait les singes s’ils avaient le loisir comme la faculté d’inventer, et si la frayeur continuelle que leur inspirent les hommes ne les retenait dans l’abrutissement*”!!! But I must pull up, as I have to write to Father still. . . .

Adieu, lots of love from your aff.

WILHELM.

The preceding letter shows James as but recently arrived in Berlin and as arranging himself there for a winter of physiology at the University. He was soon joined by his young compatriot Thomas Sergeant Perry, an intimate friend of earlier Newport days and of the subsequent Boston and Cambridge years, and the two young Americans set up joint lodgings at Number 12 in the Mittelstrasse. Although James’s main purpose was to work at the University, he was luckily not without social resources. George Bancroft, the historian and former Secretary of the Navy and Minister to England, was at this time representing the United States in Berlin and was an old family acquaintance. His and another hospitable family, the Louis Thieses, who had been Cambridge neighbors and whose house in Quincy Street the James parents had acquired upon Mr. Thies’s return to his native land, were a link with home, and at the same time rendered hospitable services to James by helping him to a few German acquaintances. By far the most congenial and interesting of these was Herman Grimm, the son of the younger of the universally beloved brothers of the Fairy Tales. Herman Grimm had married Gisela von Arnim, the daughter of Goethe’s Bettina, and was at this time a man of just past forty years. Professor

of the History of Art in the University of Berlin, essayist, author of "The Life of Michael Angelo" and of Lectures on Goethe as well as of several works of fiction, Grimm was a versatile and charming specimen of that "learned" Germany which we now think of as flourishing most amiably during the generation that preceded the Franco-Prussian War. The easy and cordial way in which his household accepted James appears, as in the next letter, to have been richly appreciated.

*To his Sister.*

BERLIN, Oct. 17, 1867.

Your excellent long letter of September 5 reached me in due time. If about that time you felt yourself strongly hugged by some invisible spiritual agency, you may now know that it was *me*. What would not I give if you could pay me a visit here! Since I last wrote home the lingual Rubicon has been passed, and I find to my surprise that I can speak German — certainly not in an ornamental manner, but there is hardly anything which I would not dare to attempt to *begin* to say and be pretty sure that a kind providence would pull me through, somehow or other. I made the discovery at my first visit to Grimm a fortnight ago, and have confirmed it several times since. I can likewise understand educated people perfectly. I feel my German as old Moses used to feel his oats, and for ten days past have walked along the street dandling my head in a fatuous manner that rivets the attention of the public. The University lectures were to have begun this week, but the lazy professors have put it off to the last of the month.

I will describe to you the manner in which I spent yesterday. *Ex uno disce omnes* — (a German proverb). I awoke



Pencil Sketches from a Pocket Note-Book.



at half-past eight at the manly voice of T. S. Perry caroling his morning hymn from his neighboring bed — if the instrument of torture the Germans sleep in be worthy of that name. After some preliminary conversation we arose, performed our washing, each in a couple of tumblers full of water in a little basin of this shape [sketch], donned our clothes, and stepped into our SALON into which the morning sun was streaming and adding its genial warmth to that of the great porcelain stove, into which the maid had put the handful of fuel (which, when ignited, makes the stove radiate heat for twelve hours) the while we slumbered. T. S. P. found on the table a letter from [Moorfield] Storey, which the same vigilant maid had placed there, and I the morning paper, full of excitement about the Italian affairs and the diabolical designs of Napoleon on Germany. After a breakfast of cocoa, eggs and excellent rolls, I finished the paper, and took up my regular reading, while T. S. P. worked at his German lesson. I finished the chapter in a treatise on Galvanism which bears the neat and concise title of [*not deciphered*].

By 10 o'clock T. S. P. had gone to his German lesson, and it was about time for me to rig up to go to Grimm's to dine, having received a kind invitation the day before. As I passed through the pleasant wood called the "Thiergarten," which was filled with gay civil and military cavaliers, I looked hard for the imposing equestrian figure of the Hon. Geo. Bancroft; but he was not to be seen. I got safely to Grimm's, and in a moment the other guest arrived. Herr Professor —, whose name I could not catch,<sup>1</sup> a man of a type I have never met before. He is writing now a life of Schleiermacher of which one volume is published. A soft fat man with black hair (somewhat the type of the photo-

<sup>1</sup> The Herr Professor was later identified as W. Dilthey.

graphs of Renan), of a totally uncertain age between 25 and 40, with little bits of green eyes swimming in their fat-filled orbits, and the rest of his face quite "realizing one's idea" of the infant Bacchus. I, with my usual want of enterprise, have neglected hitherto to provide myself with a swallow-tailed coat; but I had a resplendent fresh-biled shirt and collar, while the Professor, who wore the "obligatory coat," etc., had an exceedingly grimy shirt and collar and a rusty old rag of a cravat. Which of us most violated the proprieties I know not, but your feminine nature will decide. Grimm wore a yellowish, greenish, brownish coat whose big collar and cuffs and enormous flaps made me strongly suspect it had been the property of the brothers Grimm, who had worn it on state occasions, and dying, bequeathed it to Herman. The dinner was very good. The Prof. was overflowing with information with regard to everything knowable and unknowable. He is the first man I have ever met of a class, which must be common here, of men to whom learning has become as natural as breathing. A learned man at home is in a measure isolated; his study is carried on in private, at reserved hours. To the public he appears as a citizen and neighbor, etc., and they know at most *about* him that he is addicted to this or that study; his intellectual occupation always has something of a put-on character, and remains external at least to some part of his being. Whereas this cuss seemed to me to be nothing if not a professor . . . [*line not deciphered*] as if he were able to stand towards the rest of society *merely* in the relation of a man learned in this or that branch — and never for a moment forget the interests or put off the instincts of his specialty. If he should meet people or circumstances that could in no measure be dealt with on that ground, he would pass on and ignore them, instead of being obliged, like

an American, to sink for the time the specialty. He talked and laughed incessantly at table, related the whole history of Buddhism to Mrs. Grimm, and I know not what other points of religious history. After dinner Mrs. Grimm went, at the suggestion of her husband, to take a nap . . . [*line not deciphered*] while G. and the Professor engaged in a hot controversy about the natural primitive forms of religion, Grimm inclining to the view that the historically first form must have been monotheistic. I noticed the Professor's replies grow rather languid, when suddenly his fat head dropped forward, and G. cried out that he had better take a good square nap in the arm-chair. He eagerly snatched at the proposal. Grimm got him a clean handkerchief, which he threw over his face, and presently he seemed to slumber. Grimm woke him in ten minutes to take some coffee. He rose, refreshed like a giant, and proceeded to fight with Grimm about the identity of Homer. Grimm has just been studying the question and thinks that the poems of Homer *must* have been composed in a *written* language. From there through a discussion about the madness of Hamlet — G. being convinced that Shakespeare *meant* to mystify the reader, and intentionally constructed a riddle. The sun waned low and I took my leave in company with the Prof. We parted at the corner, *without* the Prof. telling me (as an honest, hospitable American would have done) that he would be happy to see me at his domicile, so that I know not whether I shall be able to continue acquainted with a man I would fain know more of.

I got into a droschke and, coming home, found T. S. P. in the room, and while telling him of the events of the dinner was interrupted by the entrance of the Rev. H. W. Foote of Stone Chapel. . . . The excellent little man had presented himself a few evenings before, bringing me from Dresden



a very characteristic note from Elizabeth Peabody (in which among other things she says she is "on the wing for Italy"—she is as *folâtre* a creature as your friend Mrs. W——), and we have dined together every day since, and had agreed to go to hear "Fidelio" together at the Opera that evening. Foote is really a good man and I shall prosecute his friendship every moment of his stay here; seems to have his mind open to every interest, and has a sweet modesty that endears him to the heart. He goes home next month. I advise Harry to call and see him; I know he will sympathize with him. T. S. P. never grows weary of repeating a pun of Ware's about him in Italy, who, when asked what had become of Foote (they traveled for a time together), replied: "I left him at the Hotel, hand in glove with the Bootts."

"Fidelio" was truly musical. After it, I went to Zennig's restaurant (it was over by quarter before nine), where I had made a rendez-vous with a young Doctor to whom Mr. Thies had given me a letter. Having been away from Berlin, I had seen him for the first time the day before yesterday. He is a very swell young Jew with a gorgeous cravat, blue-black whiskers and oily ringlets, not prepossessing; and we had made this appointment. I waited half an hour and, the faithless Israelite not appearing, came home, and after reading a few hours went to bed.

*Two hours later.* I have just come in from dinner, a ceremony which I perform at the aforesaid Zennig's, Unter den Linden. (By the bye, you must not be led by that name to imagine, as I always used to, an avenue overshadowed by patriarchal lime trees, whose branches form a long arch. The "Linden" are two rows of small, scrubby, abortive horse-chestnuts, beeches, limes and others, planted like the trees in Commonwealth Avenue.) Zennig's is a

table-d'hôte, so-called notwithstanding the unities of hour and table are violated. You have soup, three courses, and dessert or coffee and cheese for 12½ Groschen if you buy 14 tickets, and I shall probably dine there all winter. We dined with Foote today, who spoke among other things of a new English novel whose heroine "had the bust and arms of the Venus of Milo." T. S. P. remarked that her having the arms might account for the Venus herself being without them.

I enclose you the photograph of an actress here with whom I am in love. A neat coiffure, is it not? I also send you a couple more of my own precious portraits. I got them taken to fulfill a promise I had made to a young Bohemian lady at Teplitz, the niece of the landlady. Sweet Anna Adamowiz! (pronounce — *viitch*), which means descendant of Adam.— She belongs consequently to one of the very first families in Bohemia. I used to drive dull care away by writing her short notes in the Bohemian tongue such as; "Navzdy budeš v me mysli Irohmn pamatkou," *i.e.*, forever bloomest thou in my memory;—"dej mne tooji bodo biznu," give me your photograph; and isolated phrases as "Mlaxik, Dicka, pritel, pritelkyne," *i.e.*, Jüngling, Mädchen, Freund, Freundin; "mi luja," I love, etc. These were carried to her by the chambermaid, and the style, a little more florid than was absolutely *required* by mere courtesy, was excused by her on the ground of my limited acquaintance with the subtleties of the language. Besides, the sentiments were on the whole good and the error, if any, in the right direction. When she gave me her photograph (which I regret to say she spelt "fotokraft"!!!!) she made me promise to send her mine. Hence mine.

I have been this afternoon to get a dress-coat measured,

which will doubtless be a comfort to you to know. I must now stop. G —

I had got as far as the above G when the faithless Israelite of yesterday evening came in. He gave a satisfactory explanation of his absence and has been making a very pleasant visit. He is coming back at nine o'clock to take us (after the German mode of exercising hospitality) to a tavern to meet some of his boon companions. I reckon he is a better fellow than he seemed at first sight. I will leave this letter open till tomorrow to let you know what happens at the tavern, and whether the boon companions are old-clothes men, or Christian gentlemen. Good-night, my darling sister! Sei tausend mal von mir geküsst.<sup>2</sup> Give my best love to Father, Mother, Aunt Kate, the boys and everyone. Ever yr. loving bro.,

WM. JAMES.

11 P.M. Decidedly the Jew rises in my estimation. He treated us in the German fashion to a veal cutlet and a glass of beer which we paid for ourselves. His boon companions were apparently Christians of a half-baked sort. One who sat next to me was half drunk [and] insisted on talking the most hideous English. T. S. P., who necessarily took small part in the conversation, endeavored to explain to Selberg that he was a "skeleton at the banquet," but could not get through. I came to his assistance, but forgot, of course, the word "Skelett," and found nothing better to say than that he was a *vertebral column* at their banquet, which classical allusion I do not think was understood by the Jew. The young men did not behave with the politeness and attention to us which would have been shown to two Germans by a similar crowd at home. Sel-

<sup>2</sup> I send you a thousand kisses.

berg himself however improved every minute, and I have no doubt will turn out a capital fellow. Excuse these scraps of paper,

W. J. Good night.

*To his Sister.*

BERLIN, Nov. 19, 1867.

SÜSS BALCHEN! — I stump wearily up the three flights of stairs after my dinner to this lone room where no human company but a ghastly lithograph of Johannes Müller and a grinning skull are to cheer me. Out in the street the slaw and fine rain is falling as if it would never stop — the sky is low and murky, and the streets filled with water and that finely worked-up paste of mud which never is seen on our continent. For some time past I have thought with longing of the brightness and freshness of my home in New England — of the extraordinary, and in ordinary moments little appreciated, but sometimes-coming-across-you-and-striking-you-with-an-unexpected-sense-of-rich-privilege blessings of a mother's love (excuse my somewhat German style) — of the advantage of having a youthful-hearted though bald-headed father who looks at the Kosmos as if it had some life in it — of the delicious and respectable meals in the family circle with the aforesaid father telling touching horse-car anecdotes,<sup>1</sup> and the serene Harry dealing his snubs around — with a clean female handmaiden to wait, and an open fire to toast one's self at afterwards instead of one of these pallid porcelain monuments here, — with a whole country around you full of friends and acquaintances in whose company you can refresh your social nature, a library of books in the house and a still bigger one over the

<sup>1</sup> "When in his grotesque moods [the elder Henry James] maintained that, to a right-minded man, a crowded Cambridge horse-car 'was the nearest approach to Heaven upon earth.'" E. L. Godkin, *Life*, vol. II, p. 117.

way,— and all the rest of it. The longer I live, the more inclined am I to value the domestic affections and to be satisfied with the domestic and citizenly virtues (probably only for the reason that I am temporarily debarred from exercising any of them, I blush to think). At any rate I feel *now* and *here* the absence of any object with which to start up some sympathy, and the feeling is real and unpleasant while it lasts.

I ought not, I confess, to sing in this tune *today*, for before dinner I made a call on a young lady here (named Frä. Bornemann) whom I had met at Mrs. Grimm's and whom Mrs. G. had advised me to go and see. She lives with her brother, an *Advocat*. They are rich orflings, and I had really a friendly visit there and hope it may ripen into familiarity. I got on tolerably well with the German — only making one laughable mistake, viz. in talking of the shower of meteors, *Stern-schnuppen*, the other night to speak of the "Stern-schnupfen" (*Schnupfen* = snuffles, catarrh). And this visit is the occasion of my writing this week to you. Frä. B. is intimate with Miss Thies, and hearing that we lived in their house, she was seized with an extremely German desire to have some ivy leaves or other leaves from the garden to surprise Miss Thies with on Christmas. Your young female heart will probably beat responsive to the project and *infallibly* by return mail send the leaves. She only wants one or two. You might also send a board from the flooring, some old grass and bits of hay from the front "lawn," or cut out an eye from the "gal" who is so much "struck with them babies" <sup>\*</sup> in the parlor. They would all awaken tender memories, I have no doubt. Now do not delay even for one day to execute this, Alice! but set

<sup>\*</sup> An allusion to a picture in the parlor which had formerly belonged to the Thieses.

about it now with this letter in your hand. You see there is no time to lose, and I am very anxious not to disappoint the excellent young lady.

The few commissions and questions I have sent home have been so unnoticed and disregarded that I hardly hope for success this time. It has always been the way with me, however, from birth upwards, and Heaven forbid that I should now begin to complain! But lo! I here send another commission. I definitely appoint by name my father H. James, Senior, author of *Substance & Shadder*, etc., to perform it; and solemnly charge all the rest of you to be as lions in his path, as thorns upon his side, as lumps in his mashed potatoes, until he do it or write me Nay. 'Tis to send by post Cousin's lectures on Kant, and that other French translation of a German introduction to Kant, which he bought last winter! By return of mail! And if not convenient to send the books, to write me the name of the author of the last-mentioned one, which I have forgotten. It behooves me to learn something of the "Philosopher of Königsberg," and I want these to ease the way. I sincerely hope that these words may not be utterly thrown away.

I got a letter from Mother the day after I wrote last week to Harry, without date, but written after the Tweedies' visit. I got this morning a "Nation" and the "advertisement" to Father's Essay on Swedenborg. In the latter the old lyre is twanged with a greater freshness and force than ever, so that even T. S. Perry was made to vibrate in unison with it. I wrote to Father three weeks ago respecting his former article. I hope the letter is by this time in his hands. I am very sorry the fat one went astray. It contained, *inter alia*, an account of my expenditure up to its time of writing. I would give a good deal to be able to enjoy

as you are all doing the society of Venerable Brother Robertson. It is a great pity that we should get so estranged by separation from each other. I wish, now he's at home, he would once write to me. I have got tolerably well to work, and enjoy my lectures at the University intensely. Are the "Rainbows for Children" I see noticed in the "Nation" that old book by Mrs. Tappan? I hope Harry is not the person therein mentioned as having palmed off on Godkin a translation from the German as an original article on Thorwaldsen. You have not told me a word about the Tappans since I quit. I am very glad to hear of Aunt Kate's leg being so much better and staying so. Tell her I hope it has not been improving at the expense of her heart, as her long silence sometimes makes me shudderingly fear.

Adieu. 1000 kisses to all, not forgetting Ellen.<sup>2</sup>

Ever your Bruder, W. J.

*To Thomas W. Ward.*

[Fragment of a letter from Berlin,  
circa Nov. 1867?]

... I have begun going to the physiological lectures at the University. There are in all seven courses and four lectures. I take five courses and three lectures. There is a bully physiological laboratory, the sight of which, inaccessible as it is to me in my present condition, gave me a sharp pang. I have blocked out some reading in physiology and psychology which I hope to execute this winter — though reading German is still disgustingly slow. ... It seems to me that perhaps the time has come for psychology to begin to be a science — some measurements have already been made in the region lying between the physical changes in

<sup>2</sup> A devoted family servant.

the nerves and the appearance of consciousness-at (in the shape of sense perceptions), and more may come of it. I am going on to study what is already known, and perhaps may be able to do some work at it. Helmholtz and a man named Wundt at Heidelberg are working at it, and I hope I live through this winter to go to them in the summer. From all this talk you probably think I am working straight ahead — towards a definite aim. Alas, no! I finger book-covers as ineffectually as ever. The fact is, this sickness takes all the spring, physical and mental, out of a man. . . .

*To Thomas W. Ward.*

BERLIN, Nov. 7, 1867.

. . . If six years ago I could have felt the same satisfied belief in the worthiness of a life devoted to simple, patient, monotonous, scientific labor day after day (without reference to its results) and at the same time have had some inkling of the importance and nature of *education* (i.e., getting orderly habits of thought, and by intense exercise in a variety of different subjects, getting the mind supple and delicate and firm), I might be now on the path to accomplishing something some day, even if my health had turned out no better than it is. But my habits of mind have been so bad that I feel as if the greater part of the last ten years had been worse than wasted, and now have so little surplus of physical vigor as to shrink from trying to retrieve them. Too late! too late! If I had been *drilled* further in mathematics, physics, chemistry, logic, and the history of metaphysics, and had established, even if only in my memory, a firm and thoroughly familiar *basis* of knowledge in all these sciences (like the basis of human anatomy one gets in studying medicine), to which I should involuntarily refer all subsequently acquired facts and thoughts,—instead of



having now to keep going back and picking up loose ends of these elements, and wasting whole hours in looking to see how the new facts are related to them, or whether they are related to them at all,— I might be steadily advancing. — But enough! Excuse the damned whine of this letter; I had no idea whatever of writing it when I sat down, but I am in a mood of indigestion and blueness. I would not send you the letter at all, were it not that I thought it might tempt you soon to write to me. You have no idea, my dear old Tom, how I long to hear a word about you. . . .

*To Henry P. Bowditch.*

BERLIN, Dec. 12, 1867.

BESTER HEINRICH,— I have arrived safely on this side of the ocean and hasten to inform you of the fact.— What a fine pair of young men we are to write so punctually and constantly to each other! — I will not gall you by any sarcasms, however (I naturally think you are more to blame than myself), because (as you naturally are of a similar way of thinking) you might recriminate at great length in your next and much other to-me-more-agreeable matter be crowded out of your letter. Suffice [it] to say that I have thought of you continually, and with undiminished affection, since that bright April morn when we parted; but I am of such an invincibly inert nature as regards letter-writing that it takes a combination of outward and inward circumstances and motives that hardly ever happens, to start me. I wrote you a letter last summer, but destroyed it because I was in such doleful dumps while writing it that it would have given you too unpleasant an impression. . . .

I live near the University, and attend all the lectures on physiology that are given there, but am unable to do anything in the Laboratory, or to attend the clinics or

Virchow's lectures and demonstrations, etc. Du Bois-Raymond, an irascible man of about forty-five, gives a very good and clear, yea, brilliant, series of five lectures a week, and two ambitious young Jews give six more between them which are almost as instructive. The opportunities for study here are superb, it seems to me. Whatever they may be in Paris, they *cannot* be better. The physiological laboratory, with its endless array of machinery, frogs, dogs, etc., etc., almost "bursts my gizzard," when I go by it, with vexation. The German language is not child's play. I have lately begun to understand almost everything I hear said around me; but I still speak "with a slight foreign accent," as you may suppose — and, with all my practice in reading, do not think I can read more than half as fast as in English. It is very discouraging to get over so little ground. But a steady boring away is bound to fetch it, I suppose; and it seems to me it is worth the trouble.

The general level of thoroughness and exactness in scientific work here is beyond praise; and the abundance of books on every division of every subject something we English have no idea of. It all comes from the thorough mode of educating the people from childhood up. The *Staats Examina*, before passing which no doctor can practise here in Prussia, exact an amount of physiological, and what we at home call "merely theoretical" knowledge of the candidate, which a young doctor at home would claim and receive especial distinction for having made himself master of. But the men here think it but fair; gird about their loins and set about working their way through. The general impression the Germans make on me is not at all that of a remarkably intellectually gifted people; and if they are not so, their eminence must come solely from their habits of conscientious and plodding work. It may be

that their expressionless faces do their minds injustice. I don't know enough of them to decide. But I know the work is a large factor in the result. It makes one repine at the way he has been brought up, to come here. Unhappily most of us come too late to profit by what we see. Bad habits are formed, and life hurries us on too much to stop and drill. But it seems to me that the fact of so many American students being here of late years (they outnumber greatly all other foreign students) ought to have a good influence on the training of the succeeding generation with us. Tuck, Dwight, Dick Derby, Quincy, Townsend, and Heaven knows how many more are in Vienna. Tuck and Dwight write me that they are getting on remarkably well. I saw them both here in September and think T. D. improves a good deal as he grows older.

Berlin is a bleak and unfriendly place. The inhabitants are rude and graceless, but must conceal a solid worth beneath it. I only know seven of them, and they are of the *élite*. It is very hard getting acquainted with them, as you have to make all the advances yourself; and your antagonist shifts so between friendliness and a drill sergeant's formal politeness that you never know exactly on what footing you stand with him. These Prussians bow in the most amusing way you ever saw,—as if an invisible hand suddenly punched them in the abdomen and an equally invisible foot forthwith kicked them in the rear,—one time and two motions, and they do it 100 times a day.

But enough of national gossip—let us return to that about individuals. Oh! that I could see thy prominent nose and thy sagacious eyes at this moment relieved against the back of that empty arm-chair that stands opposite this table. Oh! that we might once again sit apart from the fretful and insipid herd of our congeners, and take counsel

together concerning the world and life — our lives in particular, and all life in general. How the shy goddess would tremble in her hiding-places at the sound of our unerringly approaching voices. And how you would pour into my astonished ear all that is new and wonderful about pathology and microscopical research, all that is sound and neat about operative surgery, while I would recite the most thrilling chapters of Kolliker's "*Entwickelungs-geschichte*," or Helmholtz's "*Innervationsfortpflanzungsgeschwindigkeitsbestimmungen*"! I suppose you have been rolling on like a great growing snowball through the vast fields of medical knowledge and are fairly out of the long tunnel of low spirits that leads there by this time. It is only three months since I have taken up medical reading, as I made all sorts of excursions into the language when I came here, and, owing to the slowness of progression I spoke of above, I have not got over much ground. Of course I can never hope to practise; but I shall graduate on my return, and perhaps pick up a precarious and needy living by doing work for medical periodicals or something of that kind — though I hate writing as I do the foul fiend. But I don't want to break off connexion with biological science. I can't be a teacher of physiology, pathology, or anatomy; for I can't do laboratory work, much less microscopical or anatomical. I may get better, but hardly before it will be too late for me to begin school again.

I'll tell you what let's do! Set up a partnership, you to run around and attend to the patients while I will stay at home and, reading everything imaginable in English, German, and French, distil it in a concentrated form into your mind. This division of labor will give the firm an immense advantage over all of our wooden-headed contemporaries. For, in your person, it will have more experience

than any one else has time to acquire; and in mine, more learning. We will divide the profits equally, of course; and he who survives the other (you, probably) will inherit the whole. Does not the idea tempt you? If you don't like it, I'll go you halves in the profits in any other feasible way. Seriously, you see I have no very definite plans for the future; but I have enough to keep body and soul together for some years to come, and I see no need of providing for more. This talk of course is only for your "private ear." I want you to write immediately on receipt of this,—for if you don't then, you never will,—and tell me all about what you've been doing and learning and what your future plans are. Also, gossip about the School and Hospital. I have not had a chance to talk medicine with any one but Dwight and Tuck (for a week), and hunger thereafter. . . . Believe me, ever til deth, your friend

WM. JAMES.

T. S. Perry of '66, who lives with me here, reminds me of a story to tell you. He lived with Architect Ware in Paris, and Ware received a visit from Dr. Bowditch and Mr. Dixwell last summer. The concierge woman was terribly impressed by the personal majesty of your uncles, particularly of Dr. Bowditch, of whom she said: "Il a le grand air, tout à fait comme Christophe Colomb!" It would be curious to understand exactly who and what she thought C. C. was, or whether she would have thought Mr. Dixwell like *Americus Vespucius* if she had known *him*.

*To O. W. Holmes, Jr.*

BERLIN, Jan. 3, 1868.

MY DEAR WENDLE,—Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten, dass ich so traurig bin, tonight. The ghosts of the past all start from their unquiet graves and keep dancing a senseless

whirligig around me so that, after trying in vain to read three books, to sleep, or to think, I clutch the pen and ink and resolve to work off the fit by a few lines to one of the most obtrusive ghosts of all — namely the tall and lank one of Charles Street. Good golly! how I would prefer to have about twenty-four hours talk with you up in that whitely lit-up room — without the sun rising or the firmament revolving so as to put the gas out, without sleep, food, clothing or shelter except your whiskey bottle, of which, or the like of which, I have not partaken since I have been in these longitudes! I should like to have you opposite me in any mood, whether the facetiously excursive, the metaphysically discursive, the personally confidential, or the jadedly *cursive* and argumentative — so that the oyster-shells which enclose my being might slowly turn open on their rigid hinges under the radiation, and the critter within loll out his dried-up gills into the circumfused ichor of life, till they grew so fat as not to know themselves again. I feel as if a talk with you of any kind could not fail to set me on my legs again for three weeks at least. I have been chewing on two or three dried-up old cuds of ideas I brought from America with me, till they have disappeared, and the nudity of the Kosmos has got beyond anything I have as yet experienced. I have not succeeded in finding any companion yet, and I feel the want of some outward stimulus to my Soul. There is a man named Grimm here whom my soul loves, but in the way Emerson speaks of, *i.e.* like those people we meet on staircases, etc., and who always ignore our feelings towards them. I don't think we shall ever be able to establish a straight line of communication between us.

I don't know how it is I am able to take so little interest in reading this winter. I marked out a number of books when I first came here, to finish. What with their heavi-

ness and the damnable slowness with which the Dutch still goes, they weigh on me like a haystack. I loathe the thought of them; and yet they have poisoned my slave of a conscience so that I can't enjoy anything else. I have reached an age when practical work of some kind clamors to be done — and I must still wait!

There! Having worked off that pent-up gall of six weeks' accumulation I feel more genial. I wish I could have some news of you — now that the postage is lowered to such a ridiculous figure (and no letter is double) there remains no *shadow* of an excuse for not writing — but, still, I don't expect anything from you. I suppose you are sinking ever deeper into the sloughs of the law — yet I ween the Eternal Mystery still from time to time gives her goad another turn in the raw she once established between your ribs. Don't let it heal over yet. When I get home let's establish a philosophical society to have regular meetings and discuss none but the very tallest and broadest questions — to be composed of none but the very topmost cream of Boston manhood. It will give each one a chance to air his own opinion in a grammatical form, and to sneer and chuckle when he goes home at what damned fools all the other members are — and may grow into something very important after a sufficient number of years.

The German character is without mountains or valleys; its favorite food is roast veal; and in other lines it prefers whatever may be the analogue thereof — all which gives life here a certain flatness to the high-tuned American taste. I don't think any one need care much about coming here unless he wants to dig very deeply into some exclusive specialty. I have been reading nothing of any interest but some chapters of physiology. There has a good deal been doing here of late on the physiology of the senses, overlapping

perception, and consequently, in a measure, the psychological field. I am wading my way towards it, and if in course of time I strike on anything exhilarating, I'll let you know.

I'll now pull up. I don't know whether you take it as a compliment that I should only write to you when in the dimmest of dumps — perhaps you ought to — you, the one emergent peak, to which I cling when all the rest of the world has sunk beneath the wave. Believe me, my Wendly boy, what poor possibility of friendship abides in the crazy frame of W. J. meanders about thy neighborhood. Good-bye! Keep the same bold front as ever to the Common Enemy — and don't forget your ally,

W. J.

That is, after all, all I wanted to write you and it may float the rest of the letter. Pray give my warm regards to your father, mother and sister; and my love to the honest Gray and to Jim Higginson.

*[Written on the outside of the envelope.]*

Jan. 4. By a strange coincidence, after writing this last night, I received yours this morning. Not to sacrifice the postage-stamps which are already on the envelope (Economic W!) I don't reopen it. But I will write you again soon. Meanwhile, bless your heart! thank you! *Vide* Shakespeare: sonnet xxix.

*To Thomas W. Ward.*

BERLIN, Jan. —, 1868.

. . . It made me feel quite sad to hear you talk about the inward deadness and listlessness into which you had again fallen in New York. Bate not a jot of heart nor hope, but steer right onward. Take for granted that you've got a temperament from which you must make up your mind



to expect twenty times as much anguish as other people need to get along with. Regard it as something as external to you as possible, like the curl of your hair. Remember when old December's darkness is everywhere about you, that the world is really in every minutest point as full of life as in the most joyous morning you ever lived through; that the sun is whanging down, and the waves dancing, and the gulls skimming down at the mouth of the Amazon, for instance, as freshly as in the first morning of creation; and the hour is just as fit as any hour that ever was for a new gospel of cheer to be preached. I am sure that one can, by merely thinking of these matters of fact, limit the power of one's evil moods over one's way of looking at the Kosmos.

I am very glad that you think the methodical habits you must stick to in book-keeping are going to be good discipline to you. I confess to having had a little feeling of spite when I heard you had gone back on science; for I had always thought you would one day emerge into deep and clear water there — by keeping on long enough. But I really don't think it so *all-important* what our occupation is, so long as we do respectably and keep a clean bosom. Whatever we are *not* doing is pretty sure to come to us at intervals, in the midst of our toil, and fill us with pungent regrets that it is lost to us. I have felt so about zoölogy whenever I was not studying it, about anthropology when studying physiology, about practical medicine lately, now that I am cut off from it, etc., etc., etc.; and I conclude that that sort of nostalgia is a necessary incident of our having imaginations, and we must expect it more or less whatever we are about. I don't mean to say that in some occupations we should not have less of it though.

My dear old Thomas, you have always sardonically

greeted me as the man of calm and clockwork feelings. The reason is that your own vehemence and irregularity was so much greater, that it involuntarily, no matter what my private mood might have been, threw me into an outwardly antagonistic one in which I endeavored to be a clog to your mobility, as it were. So I fancy you have always given me credit for less sympathy with you and understanding of your feelings than I really have had. All last winter, for instance, when I was on the continual verge of suicide, it used to amuse me to hear you chaff my animal contentment. The appearance of it arose from my reaction against what seemed to me your unduly *noisy* and demonstrative despair. The fact is, I think, that we have both gone through a good deal of similar trouble; we resemble each other in being both persons of rather wide sympathies, not particularly logical in the processes of our minds, and of mobile temperament; though your physical temperament being so much more tremendous than mine makes a great quantitative difference both in your favor, and against you, as the case may be.

Well, neither of us wishes to be a mere loafer; each wishes a work which shall by its mere *exercise* interest him and at the same time allow him to feel that through it he takes hold of the reality of things — whatever that may be — in some measure. Now the first requisite is hard for us to fill, by reason of our wide sympathy and mobility; we can only choose a business in which the evil of feeling restless shall be at a minimum, and then go ahead and make the best of it. That minimum will grow less every year.— In this connection I will again refer to a poem you probably know: "A Grammarian's Funeral," by R. Browning, in "Men and Women." It always strengthens my backbone to read it, and I think the feeling it expresses of throwing

upon eternity the responsibility of making good your one-sidedness somehow or other ("Leave *now* for dogs and apes, Man has forever") is a gallant one, and fit to be trusted if one-sided activity is in itself at all respectable.

The other requirement is hard theoretically, though practically not so hard as the first. All I can tell you is the thought that with me outlasts all others, and onto which, like a rock, I find myself washed up when the waves of doubt are weltering over all the rest of the world; and that is the thought of my having a will, and of my belonging to a brotherhood of men possessed of a capacity for pleasure and pain of different kinds. For even at one's lowest ebb of belief, the fact remains empirically certain (and by our will we can, if not *absolutely* refrain from looking beyond that empirical fact, at least practically and *on the whole* accept it and let it suffice us) — that men suffer and enjoy. And if we have to give up all hope of seeing into the purposes of God, or to give up theoretically the idea of final causes, and of God anyhow as vain and leading to nothing for us, we can, by our will, make the enjoyment of our brothers stand us in the stead of a final cause; and through a knowledge of the fact that that enjoyment on the whole depends on what individuals accomplish, lead a life so active, and so sustained by a clean conscience as not to need to fret much. Individuals can add to the welfare of the race in a variety of ways. You may delight its senses or "taste" by some production of luxury or art, comfort it by discovering some moral truth, relieve its pain by concocting a new patent medicine, save its labor by a bit of machinery, or by some new application of a natural product. You may open a road, help start some social or business institution, contribute your mite in *any* way to the mass of the work which each generation subtracts from the task of

the next; and you will come into *real* relations with your brothers — with some of them at least.

I know that in a certain point of view, and the most popular one, this seems a cold activity for our affections, a stone instead of bread. We long for sympathy, for a purely *personal* communication, first with the soul of the world, and then with the soul of our fellows. And happy are they who think, or know, that they have got them! But to those who must confess with bitter anguish that they are perfectly isolated from the soul of the world, and that the closest human love incloses a potential germ of estrangement or hatred, that all *personal* relation is finite, conditional, mixed (*vide* in Dana's "Household Book of Poetry," stanzas by C. P. Cranch, "Thought is deeper than speech," etc., etc.), it may not prove such an unfruitful substitute. At least, when you have added to the property of the race, even if no one knows your name, yet it is certain that, without what you have done, some individuals must needs be acting now in a somewhat different manner. You have modified their life; you are in *real* relation with them; you have in so far forth entered into their being. And is that such an unworthy stake to set up for our good, after all? Who are these men anyhow? Our predecessors, even apart from the physical link of generation, have made us what we are. Every thought you now have and every act and intention owes its complexion to the acts of your dead and living brothers. *Everything* we know and are is through men. We have no revelation but through man. Every sentiment that warms your gizzard, every brave act that ever made your pulse bound and your nostril open to a confident breath was a man's act. However mean a man may be, man is *the best we know*; and your loathing as you turn from what you probably call the vulgarity of human life

— your homesick yearning for a *Better*, somewhere — is furnished by your manhood; your ideal is made up of traits suggested by past men's words and actions. Your manhood shuts you in forever, bounds all your thoughts like an overarching sky — and all the Good and True and High and Dear that you know by virtue of your sharing in it. They are the Natural Product of our Race. So that it seems to me that a sympathy with men as such, and a desire to contribute to the weal of a species, which, whatever may be said of it, contains All that we acknowledge as good, may very well form an external interest sufficient to keep one's moral pot boiling in a very lively manner to a good old age. The idea, in short, of becoming an accomplice in a sort of "Mankind its own God or Providence" scheme is a *practical* one.

I don't mean, by any means, to affirm that we must come to that, I only say it is *a* mode of envisaging life; which is capable of affording moral support — and may at any rate help to bridge over the despair of skeptical intervals. I confess that, in the lonesome gloom which beset me for a couple of months last summer, the only feeling that kept me from giving up was that by waiting and living, by hook or crook, long enough, I might make my *nick*, however small a one, in the raw stuff the race has got to shape, and so assert my reality. The stoic feeling of being a sentinel obeying orders without knowing the general's plans is a noble one. And so is the divine enthusiasm of moral culture (Channing, etc.), and I think that, successively, they may all help to ballast the same man.

What a preacher I'm getting to be! I had no idea when I sat down to begin this long letter that I was going to be carried away so far. I feel like a humbug whenever I endeavor to enunciate moral truths, because I am at bottom

so skeptical. But I resolved to throw off "*views*" to you, because I know how stimulated you are likely to be by any accidental point of view or formula which you may not exactly have struck on before (*e.g.*, what you write me of the effect of that sentence of your mother's about marrying). I had no idea this morning that I had so many of the elements of a Pascal in me. Excuse the presumption.— But to go back. I think that in business as well as in science one can have this philanthropic aspiration satisfied. I have been growing lately to feel that a great mistake of my past life — which has been prejudicial to my education, and by telling me which, and by making me understand it some years ago, some one might have conferred a great benefit on me — is an impatience of *results*. Inexperience of life is the cause of it, and I imagine it is generally an American characteristic. I think you suffer from it. Results should not be too voluntarily aimed at or too busily thought of. They are *sure* to float up of their own accord, from a long enough daily work at a given matter; and I think the work as a mere occupation ought to be the primary interest with us. At least, I am sure this is so in the intellectual realm, and I strongly suspect it is the secret of German prowess therein. Have confidence, even when you seem to yourself to be making no progress, that, if you but go on in your own uninteresting way, they must bloom out in their good time. Ouf, my dear old Tom! I think I must pull up. I have no time or energy left to gossip to thee of our life here. . . .

*To his Father.*

TEPLITZ, Jan. 22, 1868.

MY DEAR DAD,— Don't allow yourself to be shocked with surprise on reading the above date till you hear the reasons

which have brought me here at this singular season. They are grounded in the increasing wear and tear of my life in Berlin, and in my growing impatience to get well enough to be able to do some work in the summer. . . . I find myself getting more interested in physiology and nourishing a hope that I *may* be able to make its study (and perhaps its teaching) my profession; and, joining the thought that if I came to Teplitz now for three weeks I could have still another turn at it, if necessary, in April,—before the summer semester at Heidelberg began,—to the consciousness that in my present condition I was doing worse than wasting time at Berlin, I took advantage of a fine sunshiny morning four days ago, packed my trunk, said good-bye to T. S. Perry, and took the railroad for this place. I hope you won't think from seeing me back here that my loudly trumpeted improvement in the autumn was fallacious. On the contrary, I feel more than ever, now that I am back in presence of my old measures of strength (distances, etc.), how substantial that improvement was — only it has not yet bridged the way up to complete soundness.

I have been feeling for a month past that I ought to come here, but an effeminate shrinking from loneliness and so forth, and the inhuman blackness of the weather kept me from it. Now that I am here, I am only sorry I deferred it so long. I found the *Fürstenbad* open, and with four other "cure-guests" in it. All its varletry, male and female, fat as wood-chucks from their winter's repose; a theatre (!) going in town three times a week; the head waiter of the restaurant where in the summer I used, for the price of a glass of milk, to read the "Times" and the "Independence Belge," no longer wearing the pallid look of stern and desperate *business* with which he used to scud around among the crowded tables, and which used to make me stand in mortal

fear of him, but appearing as a comfortable and red-cheeked human being with even greater conversational gifts than usual; every one moreover glad to see me, etc., etc. The veil of winter has been lifted for a week and the buried spring [has] peeped out and taken a-breathing before her time. Today everything is a-dripping, the earth has a moving smell, and the sky is full of spots of melting blue. If such weather but lasts, the time will pass here very quickly. I have brought a lot of good books, and if their interest wanes have the whole circulating library to fall back on. So much for Teplitz.

Sunday before last Mrs. Bancroft told me that the most beautiful woman in Berlin had asked after me with affection and expressed a desire to see me. After making me guess in vain she told me that it was Mrs. Lieutenant Pertz, *née* Emma Wilkinson.<sup>1</sup> I went to see her and found her looking hardly a day older or different, and certainly very good-looking, though probably Mrs. B.'s description was exaggerated. She had the sweetest and simplest of manners and asked all about the family, to whom she sends her love. She told me nothing particular about her own family which we did not know, except that Jamie had an aquiline nose. She has three fine children, much more of the British than the German type, and it was right pleasant to see her. She has very handsome brown eyes. Nice manners are a very charming thing, and some of the ladies here might set a good example to some *other* young ladies I might mention (who do not live 100 miles from Quincy Street); Fräulein Borneman, for example. Let Alice cultivate a manner clinging yet self-sustained, reserved yet confidential; let

<sup>1</sup> A daughter of Henry James, Senior's, English friend J. J. Garth Wilkinson. "Wilky" James had been named after Mr. Wilkinson. See *Notes of a Son and Brother*, p. 196.



her face beam with serious beauty, and glow with quiet delight at having you speak to her; let her exhibit short glimpses of a soul *with wings*, as it were (but very short ones); let her voice be musical and the tones of her voice full of caressing, and every movement of her full of grace, and you have no idea how lovely she will become. . . . I am sorry Wilky has had a relapse of his fever. He and Bob are still the working ones of the family (Harry too, though!), but I hope my day will yet come. Give him and Bob a great deal of love for me. Life in Teplitz is favorable to letter-writing and I will write to Bob next week. Love to every one else, from yours ever,

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry James.*

FÜRSTENBAD, TEPLITZ, *Mar.* 4, 1868.

. . . . I have been admitted to the intimacy of a family here named G——, who keep a hotel and restaurant. Immense, bulky, garrulous, kind-hearted woman, father with thick red face, little eyes and snow-white hair, two daughters of about twenty. The whole conversation and tea-taking there reminded me so exactly of Erckmann-Chatrian's stories that I wanted to get a stenographer and a photographer to take them down. The great, thick remarks, all about housekeeping and domestic economy of some sort or other; the jokes; the masses of eatables, from the awful swine soup (tasting of nothing I could think of but the perspiration of the animal and which the terrible mother forced me to gulp down by accusing me, whenever I grew pale and faltered, of not relishing their food), through the sausages (liver sausages, blood sausages, and more), to the beer and wine; then the masses of odoriferous cheese, which I refused in spite of all attacks, entreaties and accusations,

and then heard, oh, horrors! with somewhat the feeling I suppose with which a criminal hears the judge pass sentence of death upon him,— then heard an order given for some more sausages to be brought in to me instead; the air of religious earnestness with which the eating of the father was talked about, how the mother told the daughter not to give him so much wine, because he never enjoyed his beer so much after it, while he with his silver spectacles and pointing with his pudgy forefinger to the lines, read out of the newspaper half aloud to himself; the immense long room with walls of dark wood, the big old-fashioned china stove at each end of it, etc., etc.,— all brought up the *Taverne du Jambon de Mayence* into my mind. . . .

[W. J.]

The water-cure at Teplitz worked no cure; but James repaired to Heidelberg in the spring, to hear Helmholtz lecture and with the hope of following the medical courses during the summer semester. Once more he had to stop work, and for a while he returned to Berlin. From there he traveled by way of Geneva, stopping characteristically for only the very briefest of glances at the familiar scenes of his school-days, and hurrying on to spend the latter part of the summer at another watering-place, Divonne in Savoy. The following brief letter seems to have been written there, and is interesting as a first reference to Charles Renouvier, a French philosopher who later exercised an important influence on James's thinking.

*To his Father.*

[DIVONNE?], Oct. 5, 1868.

DEAR FATHER,— . . . I have not been doing much studying lately, nor indeed for some time past, though I

manage to keep something *dribbling* all the while. I began the other day Kant's "Kritik," which is written crabbedly enough, but which strikes me so far as almost the sturdiest and *honestest* piece of work I ever saw. Whether right or wrong (and it is pretty clearly wrong in a great many details of its *Analytik* part, however the rest may be), there it stands like a great snag or mark to which everything metaphysical or psychological must be *referred*. I wish I had read it earlier. It is very slow reading and I shall only give it a couple of hours daily.

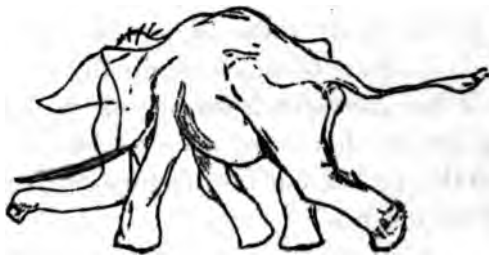
I got a little book by a number of authors, "L'Année 1867 Philosophique," which may interest you if you have not got it already. The introduction, a review of the state of philosophy in France for some years back, is by one Charles Renouvier, of whom I never heard before but who, for vigor of style and compression, going to the core of half a dozen things in a single sentence, so different from the namby-pamby diffusiveness of most Frenchmen, is unequaled by anyone. He takes his stand on Kant. I have not read the rest of the book.

Here I stop and take my douche. I will be as economical as I can this winter in details, and next summer will see us together. I wish I had the inclination to write, or anything to write about, as Harry has. I feel ashamed of fattening on the common purse when all the other boys are working, but writing seems for me next to impossible. Lots of love to all. Yours,

W. J.

The "cure" at Divonne was as profitless as had been the similar experiments at Teplitz. So instead of staying abroad for the winter, James turned his face homeward almost immediately. After a fortnight's companionship with H. P.

Bowditch in Paris, he embarked on November 7 for America, disappointed in the chief hopes with which he had landed in Europe eighteen months before, but much matured in character and thought, and resolved to seek his health and his career at home.



**Pencil Sketch from a Pocket Note-Book.**

## VI

1869-1872

### *Invalidism in Cambridge*


THE return to Cambridge from Germany in November, 1868, marked the beginning of four outwardly uneventful years. James spent them under his father's roof. His family and intimate friends were usually close at hand; the stream of his correspondence shrank to almost nothing. The few letters that have been preserved do incomplete justice to this period, but can, fortunately, be supplemented by other documents.

James obtained his medical degree easily enough in June, 1869; but he had no thought of engaging in the practice of medicine. He wanted to go on with physiology; but he was not strong enough to work in a laboratory. Condemned to sedentary occupations, and without any definite responsibilities, he seemed, to his own jaundiced vision, to be declining into a desultory and profitless idleness.

In this he was hardly fair to himself or to the conditions. It is true that he had no remunerative occupation, and that he could look forward to no well-defined professional career for which he could be preparing and training himself. He was, also, handicapped by the fact that sometimes he could not use his eyes for more than two hours a day. On the other hand, he would probably not have been happy in any professional harness into which he could then have fitted, and was really more fortunate in having leisure to read and discuss and fill note-books forced upon him be-

tween his twenty-seventh and thirty-first years. Such leisure has been the unattained goal of many another man with a mind not one tenth so curious and speculative as his; and few men who have attained it have made as good use of their free time as James made of the years 1869 to 1872.

His eyes were weak, to be sure, and his letters usually bewail his inability to use them more. But, skipping as he had trained himself to, and snatching at every opportunity, he somehow got over a great deal of reading in neurology, physiology of the nervous system, and psychology. He was not confined to the books that were on the shelves of the Quincy Street house, but could borrow from the excellent Harvard and Boston libraries without inconvenience. At times, when he was able to read for several hours a day, he used, as he put it, "to keep himself from using his mind too much" by turning to non-professional literature in German, French, and English. One letter to his brother (June 1, 1869) affords material for reflection upon the range and power of assimilation of a mind which could seek such relaxation. "I have," he writes in this letter, "been reading for recreation, since you left, a good many German books: Steffens and C. P. Moritz's autobiographies, some lyric poetry, W. Humboldt's letters, Schmidt's history of German literature, etc., which have brought to a head the slowly maturing feeling of German culture. . . . Reading of the revival, or rather the birth, of German literature — Kant, Schiller, Goethe, Jacobi, Fichte, Schelling, [the] Schlegels, Tieck, Richter, Herder, Steffens, W. Humboldt, and a number of others — puts one into a real classical period. These men were all interesting as men, each standing as a type or representative of a certain way of taking life, and beginning at the bottom — taking nothing for granted. In Eng-



land, the only parallel I can think of is Coleridge, and in France, Rousseau and Diderot. If the heroes and heroines of all of Ste.-Beuve's gossip had had a tenth part of the *significance* of these and their male and female friends, bad readers like myself would never think of growing impatient with him as an old debauchee." A diary entry made by his sister Alice, a few years later says: "In old days, when [William's] eyes were bad, and I used to begin to tell him something which I thought of interest from whatever book I might be reading . . . he would invariably say, 'I glanced into that book yesterday and read that.'"<sup>1</sup>

He had already formed the habit of making marginal

A note-book in which there are many pages of titles, under dates between 1867 and 1872, appears to have been a record of reading; it was not kept systematically and is incomplete. The following entries were made between the date "June 21, '69 — M.D." — the date of graduation from the Medical School — and the end of the year 1869. It will be understood that "R 2 M" signified the *Revue des deux Mondes*. The original entries stand in a column, without punctuation, and occupy two and a half pages. Amplifications are added in brackets:—

"A. Dumas, fils; Père prodigue, 1/2 Monde; Fils naturel, Question D'Argent. / Jung; Stilling's Leben. [5 vols. 1806]. / J. S. Mill; Subjection of Women [1869]. / H[orace] Bushnell; Woman suffrage, etc. [1869]. / Balzac; Le curé de Tours. / Browning; The Ring and the Book. / Ravaisson [Mollien]; Rapport a. l. Philosophie [La philosophie en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle. Paris, 1868]. / Goethe; Aus meinem Leben. / Coquerel fils; [Perhaps Athanase Josué Coquerel, 1820-1875, author of "Libres études" (1867)]. / Em. Burnouf; [La] Science des Religions, vi. Les orthodoxies, comment elles se forment et déclinent] R2M. July 1, 69. / Leblais; Matérialisme and Sp[iritua]lisme. [Paris, 1865]. / Littré; Paroles de [la] Philosophie positive, 1859. / Caro; le Matérialisme and la Science [1868]. / Comte and Littré; principes de Phil. pos. [Comte, Auguste. Cours de philosophie positive, 6 vols., 2nd ed. with preface by Littré. Paris, 1864]. / Littré; Bridges; replies to Mill. [Bridges, John Henry. Unity of Comte's life and doctrine; a reply to strictures on Comte's later writings, addressed to J. S. Mill. London, 1866]. / H. Spencer; Reasons for dissenting from Comte. / Secrétan; Preface to Phil. de la Liberté [1848]. / Schopenhauer; das Metaph. Bedürfniss. / H[enry] James [sen.]; Moralism and Christianity [N.Y. 1850]. / Jouffroy; Dist. ent. Psych. and Phys. [Part of the "Mélanges Philosophiques"?]. / Benedikt; Electrotherapie, first 100 pp. / Lecky; History of Morals [2 vols. 1869]. / Froude; Short Studies, etc. (skimmed). / Duke of Argyll; Primeval Man [1869]. / Turgeneff; Nouvelles Moscovites. / Lewes; [Biographical] Hist. of Phil., Prolegomena, Kant, Comte. / Geo. Sand; Constance Verrier. / Mérimée; Lokis. R2M. 15 Sept. 69. / J. Grote; Exploratio philosophica, [1865]. / H[enry]

notes, of writing down summaries of his reading, and of formulating his ideas on paper — the admirable practice, in short, of confiding in note-books and addressing himself freely to the waste-basket. For instance: "In 1869, when still a medical student, he began to write an essay showing how almost everyone who speculated about brain processes illicitly interpolated into his account of them links derived from the entirely heterogeneous universe of Feeling. Spencer, Hodgson (in his 'Time and Space'), Maudsley, Lockhart, Clarke, Bain, Dr. Carpenter, and other authors were cited as having been guilty of the confusion. The writing was soon stopped because he perceived that the view which he was upholding against these authors was a pure conception, with no proofs to be adduced of its reality."<sup>1</sup>

He kept some of his memoranda in a series of the alphabetized blank-books which used to be sold under the name of "Todd's Index Rerum" during the sixties, and which were devised to facilitate indexing and reference. He continued to make entries in these books until 1890, and perhaps later. He also filled copy-books and pocket note-books, of which a few mutilated but interesting fragments remain. In these he sometimes copied out quotations,

James [Sen.]; Lectures and Miscellanies. [1852]. / [K. J?] Simrock. / C. Reade; Griffith Gaunt. / G. Droz; Autour d'une Source. / O. Feuillet. / D. F. Strauss: Chr[ist]ian Marklin. Mannheim. 1851. / M. Müller; Chips [from a German workshop] vol. 1 and vol. 11 partly. / Lis [Elisa?] Maier; W. Humboldt's Leben [1865]. / Lis Maier; Geo. Forster's [Leben, 1856]. / Schleiermacher; Correspondenz. vol. 1. / Réville; Israelitic monotheism, R2M, 1<sup>er</sup> Sept. 69. [La religion primitive d'Israel et le développement du monothéisme]. / Deutsch; Islam. Quarterly Rev. Oct. '69. / Fichte; Best[immung] des Gelehrten. i and ii Vorlesungen. / Ste.-Beuve; Art[icle on] Leopardi, [in] Port[raits] cont[emporains] iii. / Westm[inster]: Rev[iew] Art. on Lecky. Oct. 69. / [T. G. von] Hippel; Selbstleben. / Vita de Leopardi. / Fichte; Bestim[mung] des Menschen. / Gwinner; Schopenhauer. / "

Thanks are due to Mr. E. F. Walbridge, Librarian of the New York Harvard Club, for identifying a number of abbreviated titles.

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, vol. 1, p. 130, note. The quotation is literal. The subject of the foot-note in the *Psychology* is "the author."



sometimes noted comments on his reading, sometimes tried to clothe an idea of his own in precise words. Occasionally he made diary-like entries that show how familiar a companion he was making of the note-book. He was already at his ease in the practice of the Baconian maxim that reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.

A few book-notices or reviews did reach the public. Seven are listed under the years 1868 to 1872 in Professor R. B. Perry's "List of Published Writings." Although the matter of these reviews is seldom of present-day interest, the curious reader will find sentences and paragraphs in them that are prophetic of passages in James's later writings, and will observe that he already commanded a style that expressed the color and quality of his thought.<sup>1</sup>

Considering that James, while still in his twenties, had found such resources within himself, and had learned how to occupy himself in ways so appropriate to the development of his best faculties, it would seem that he need not have labored under any sense of frustration and impotence. But such a feeling undoubtedly did weigh heavily upon him

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the use made of Touchstone's question, in the *Nation* in 1876 (quoted on page 190 *infra*). James was certainly unconscious of the repetition when he wrote page 7 of *Some Problems of Philosophy*. Consider also, a few sentences from a notice of Morley's *Voltaire* (*Atlantic Monthly*, 1872, vol. xxx, p. 624). "As the opinions of average men are swayed more by examples and types than by mere reasons, so a personality so accomplished as Mr. Morley's cannot fail by its mere attractiveness to influence all who come within its reach and inspire them with a certain friendliness toward the faith that animates it. The standard example, Goethe, is ever at hand. But to be thus widely effective, a man must not be a specialist. Mr. John Mill, weighty and many-sided as he is by nature and culture, is yet deficient in the æsthetic direction; and the same is true of M. Littré in France. Their lances lack that final tipping with light that made Voltaire's so irresistible. What Henry IV's soldiers followed was his white plume; and that imponderable superfluity, grace, in some shape, seems one factor without which no awakening of men's sympathies on a large scale can take place."

during more or less of the whole period between his winter in Berlin and 1872. And it was indeed due in great part to something else than the mere fact that he could not yet feel the rungs of the ladder of any particular career under his feet. No reader of the "Varieties of Religious Experience" can have doubted that he had known religious despondency himself as well as observed the distress of it in others. The problem of the moral constitution of things, the question of man's relation to the Universe,—whether significant or impotent and meaningless,—these had clearly come home to him as more than questions of metaphysical discourse. It was during this period that such doubts invaded his consciousness in a way that was personal and intimate and, for the time being, oppressive. He was tormented by misgivings which almost paralyzed his naturally buoyant spirit. Bad health, a feeling of the purposelessness of his own particular existence, his philosophic doubts and his constant preoccupation with them, all these combined to plunge him into a state of morbid depression. He seems to have hidden the depth of it from those who were about him. He even had an experience of that kind of melancholy "which takes the form of panic fear." When he wrote the chapter on the "sick soul" thirty years later, he put into it an account of this experience. He still disguised it as the report of an anonymous "French correspondent." Subsequently he admitted to M. Abauzit that the passage was really the story of his own case,<sup>1</sup> and it may be repeated here, for the words of the fictitious French correspondent, who was really James, are the most authentic statement that could be given. They will be found at page 160 of the "Varieties of Religious Experience."

"Whilst in this state of philosophic pessimism and general

<sup>1</sup> *William James*, by Theodore Flournoy (Geneva, 1911), p. 149 note.

depression of spirits about my prospects, I went one evening into a dressing-room in the twilight, to procure some article that was there; when suddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. Simultaneously there arose in my mind the image of an epileptic patient whom I had seen in the asylum, a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves, against the wall, with his knees drawn up against his chin, and the coarse gray undershirt, which was his only garment, drawn over them, inclosing his entire figure. He sat there like a sort of sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and looking absolutely non-human. This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other. *That shape am I*, I felt, potentially. Nothing that I possess can defend me against that fate, if the hour for it should strike for me as it struck for him. There was such a horror of him, and such a perception of my own merely momentary discrepancy from him, that it was as if something hitherto solid within my breast gave way entirely, and I became a mass of quivering fear. After this the universe was changed for me altogether. I awoke morning after morning with a horrible dread at the pit of my stomach, and with a sense of the insecurity of life that I never knew before, and that I have never felt since. It was like a revelation; and although the immediate feelings passed away, the experience has made me sympathetic with the morbid feelings of others ever since. It gradually faded, but for months I was unable to go out into the dark alone.

"In general I dreaded to be left alone. I remember wondering how other people could live, how I myself had ever lived, so unconscious of that pit of insecurity beneath the

surface of life. My mother in particular, a very cheerful person, seemed to me a perfect paradox in her unconsciousness of danger, which you may well believe I was very careful not to disturb by revelations of my own state of mind. I have always thought that this experience of melancholia of mine had a religious bearing. . . . I mean that the fear was so invasive and powerful that, if I had not clung to scripture-texts like *The eternal God is my refuge*, etc., *Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden*, etc., *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, etc., I think I should have grown really insane."

The date of this experience cannot and need not be fixed exactly. It was undoubtedly later than the Berlin winter and after the return to Cambridge. Perhaps it was during the winter of 1869-70, for one of the note-books contains an entry dated April 30, 1870, in which James's resolution and self-confidence appear to be reasserting themselves. This entry must be quoted too. It is not only illuminating with respect to 1870, but suggests parts of the "Psychology" and of the philosophic essays that later gave comfort and courage to unnumbered readers.

"I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier's second "Essais" and see no reason why his definition of Free Will — "the sustaining of a thought *because I choose to* when I might have other thoughts" — need be the definition of an illusion. At any rate, I will assume for the present — until next year — that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will. For the remainder of the year, I will abstain from the mere speculation and contemplative *Grüblei*<sup>1</sup> in which my nature takes most delight, and voluntarily cultivate the feeling of moral freedom, by reading books favor-

<sup>1</sup> Grubbing among subtleties.

able to it, as well as by acting. After the first of January, my callow skin being somewhat fledged, I may perhaps return to metaphysical study and skepticism without danger to my powers of action. For the present then remember: care little for speculation; much for the *form* of my action; recollect that only when habits of order are formed can we advance to really interesting fields of action — and consequently accumulate grain on grain of willful choice like a very miser; never forgetting how one link dropped undoes an indefinite number. *Principiis obsta* — Today has furnished the exceptionally passionate initiative which Bain posits as needful for the acquisition of habits. I will see to the sequel. Not in maxims, not in *Anschauungen*,<sup>1</sup> but in accumulated *acts* of thought lies salvation. *Passer outre*. Hitherto, when I have felt like taking a free initiative, like daring to act originally, without carefully waiting for contemplation of the external world to determine all for me, suicide seemed the most manly form to put my daring into; now, I will go a step further with my will, not only act with it, but believe as well; believe in my individual reality and creative power. My belief, to be sure, *can't* be optimistic — but I will posit life (the real, the good) in the self-governing *resistance* of the ego to the world. Life shall [be built in]<sup>2</sup> doing and suffering and creating.”

The next letter was written from Cambridge during the winter following the return from Germany, and while James was completing the work necessary to entitle him to a medical degree.<sup>3</sup> The reader will recognize “the firm of

<sup>1</sup> Regarding, or contemplative views.

<sup>2</sup> MS. doubtful.

<sup>3</sup> “I made a discovery in sending in my credentials to the Dean which gratified me. It was that, adding in conscientiously every week in which I have had anything to do with medicine, I can't sum up more than three years and two or three months. Three years is the minimum with which one can go up for examination;

B & J" as the medical partnership proposed to Bowditch in the letter of December 12, 1867.

*To Henry P. Bowditch.*

CAMBRIDGE, Jan. 24, 1869.

MY DEAR HENRY,— I am in receipt of two letters from yez (dates forgotten) wherein you speak of having received my money and paid my bills and of Fleury's book. You're a gentleman in all respects. You said nothing about whether the pounds when reduced back to francs and Thalers made exactly the original sum from which the pounds were calculated. If it was but five centimes under and you have concealed it, I shall brand you as a villain where'er I go. So out with the truth. Do I still owe you anything? . . .

I have just been quit by Chas. S. Peirce, with whom I have been talking about a couple of articles in the St. Louis "Journal of Speculative Philosophy" by him, which I have just read. They are exceedingly bold, subtle and incomprehensible, and I can't say that his vocal elucidations helped me a great deal to their understanding, but they nevertheless interest me strangely. The poor cuss sees no chance of getting a professorship anywhere, and is likely to go into the observatory for good. It seems a great pity that as original a man as he is, who is willing and able to devote the powers of his life to logic and metaphysics, should be starved out of a career, when there are lots of professorships of the sort to be given in the country to "safe," orthodox men. He has had good reason, I know, to feel a little discouraged about the prospect, but I think he ought to hang on, as a German would do, till he grows gray. . . .

but as I began away back in '63, I have been considering myself as having studied about five years, and have felt much humiliated by the greater readiness of so many younger men to answer questions and understand cases." To Henry James, June 12, 1869.

I saw Wyman a few weeks ago. He said his Indian collecting, etc., took up all his working time now. Do you keep your room above the freezing point or can't the thing be done? Have you made any bosom friends among French students, or do you find the superficial accidents of language and breeding to hold you wider apart than the deep force of your common humanity can draw you together? It's deuced discouraging to find how this is almost certain to be the case.

The older I grow, the more important does it seem to me for the interest of science and of the sick, and of the firm of B. & J., that you should take charge of a big state lunatic asylum. Think of the interesting cases, and of the autopsies! And if you once took firm root, say at Somerville, I should feel assured of a refuge in my old and destitute days, for you certainly would not be treacherous enough to spurn me from the door when I presented myself — on the pretext that I was only shamming dementia. Think of the matter seriously.

I read a little while ago Chambers's "Clinical Lectures," which are exceedingly interesting and able. The lectures on indigestion in the volume are worth, in quality, ten such books as that Guipon I left in Paris, though more limited in subject. I have been trying to get "Hilton on Rest and Pain," which you recommended, from the Athenæum, but, *more librorum*, when you want 'em, it keeps "out." . . .

I hope this letter is *décousue* enough for you. What is a man to write when a reef is being taken in his existence, and absence from thought and life is all he aspires to. Better times will come, though, and with them better letters. Good-bye! Ever yours,

WM. JAMES.

To O. W. Holmes, Jr., and John C. Gray, Jr.

[Winter of 1868-69.]

Gents! — entry-thieves — chevaliers d'industrie — well-dressed swindlers — confidence men — wolves in sheep's clothing — asses in lion's skin — gentlemanly pickpockets — beware! The hand of the law is already on your throats and waits but a wink to be tightened. All the resources of the immensely powerful Corporation of Harvard University have been set in motion, and concealment of your miserable selves or of the almost equally miserable (though not *as such* miserable) goloshes which you stole from our entry on Sunday night is as impossible as would be the concealment of the State House. The motive of your precipitate departure from the house became immediately evident to the remaining guests. But they resolved to *ignore* the matter provided the overshoes were replaced within a week; if not, no *considerations whatever* will prevent Messrs. Gurney & Perry<sup>1</sup> from proceeding to treat you with the utmost severity of the law. It is high time that some of these genteel adventurers should be made an example of, and your offence just comes in time to make the cup of public and private forbearance overflow. My father and self have pledged our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor to see the thing through with Gurney and Perry, as the credit of our house is involved and we might ourselves have been losers, not only from you but from the aforesaid G. & P., who have been heard to go about openly declaring that "if they had known the party was going to be *that* kind of an affair, d—d if they would not have started off earlier themselves with some of those aristocratic James overcoats, hats, gloves and canes!"

<sup>1</sup> Ephraim W. Gurney and T. S. Perry.



So let me as a friend advise you to send the swag back.  
No questions will be asked — Mum's the word.

WM. JAMES.

*To Thomas W. Ward.*

*March [?], 1869.*

. . . I had great movings of my bowels toward thee lately — the distant, cynical isolation in which we live with our heart's best brothers sometimes comes over me with a deep bitterness, and I had a little while ago an experience of life which woke up the spiritual monad within me as has not happened more than once or twice before in my life. "Malgré la vue des misères où nous vivons et qui nous tiennent par la gorge," there is an inextinguishable spark which will, when we least expect it, flash out and reveal the existence, at least, of something real — of reason at the bottom of things. I can't tell you how it was now. I'm swamped in an empirical philosophy.<sup>1</sup> I feel that we are Nature through and through, that we are wholly conditioned, that not a wiggle of our will happens save as the result of physical

<sup>1</sup> It ought perhaps to be noted, even if only to dismiss the subject and prevent misapprehension, that at about this time a man whose philosophic ability was great and whose thought was vigorously materialistic was often at the house in Quincy Street. This was Chauncey Wright. He was twelve years James's senior; a man whose best work was done in conversation — who wrote little, and whose talents are now to be measured chiefly by the strong impression that he made on some of his contemporaries. "Of the two motives to which philosophic systems owe their being, the craving for consistency or unity in thought, and the desire for a solid outward warrant for our emotional ends, his mind was dominated only by the former. Never in a human head was contemplation more separated from desire." (*Vide* James's obituary notice of Wright, contributed to the *Nation* for Sept. 23, 1875.) It has been suggested that Wright influenced James's thinking. If so, his influence was not lasting and, in the opinion of the editor, can easily be overstated. James was not limited to any one philosophic companionship even at this time; and if he felt Wright's influence, it is remarkable that there should be no mention of him in any of the letters or memoranda that have survived and that there was never any acknowledgment in James's subsequent writings. He was ever inclined to make acknowledgment, even to his opponents.

laws; and yet, notwithstanding, we are *en rapport* with reason.—How to conceive it? Who knows? I'm convinced that the defensive tactics of the French "spiritualists" fighting a steady retreat before materialism will never do anything.—It is not that we are all nature *but* some point which is reason, but that all is nature *and* all is reason too. We shall see, damn it, we shall see! . . .

[W. J.]

"The Bootts," with whom "architect Ware" reported the Reverend Mr. Foote to be hand in glove in Italy in 1867, reappear in the following letter. Francis Boott (Harvard 1832) had early been left a widower, and had just returned from a long European residence which he had devoted to the education of his charming and gifted daughter "Lizzie," later to become the wife of Frank Duveneck of Cincinnati, the painter and sculptor. Boott was about the age of Henry James, Senior, but the intimacy which began at Pomfret during the summer of 1869 ripened into one of those whole-family friendships which obliterate differences of age. Later, although both the elder Jameses and young Mrs. Duveneck had died, William and Boott saw each other frequently in Cambridge. The beautiful little commemorative address which James delivered after Boott's death has been included in the volume of "Memories and Studies."

*To Henry P. Bowditch.*

POMFRET, CONN., Aug. 12, 1869.

. . . I have been at this place since July 1st with my family. There are a few farmhouses close together on the same road, which take boarders. We are in the best of them, and very pleasant it is. The country is beautifully

hilly and fertile, and the climate deliciously windy and cool. I came here resolved to lead the life of an absolute caterpillar, and have succeeded very well so far, spending most of my time swinging in a hammock under the pine trees in front of the house, and having hardly read fifty pages of anything in the whole six weeks. It has told on me most advantageously. I am far better every way than when I came, and am beginning to walk about quite actively. Maybe it's the beginning of a final rise to health, but I'm so sick of prophesying that I won't say anything about it till it gets more confirmed. One thing is sure, however, that I've given the policy of "rest" a fair trial and shall consider myself justified next winter in going about visiting and to concerts, etc., regardless of the fatigue.

I am forgetting all this while to tell you that I passed my examination with no difficulty and am entitled to write myself M.D., if I choose. Buckingham's midwifery gave me some embarrassment, but the rest was trifling enough. So there is one epoch of my life closed, and a pretty important one, I feel it, both in its scientific "yield" and in its general educational value as enabling me to see a little the inside workings of an important profession and to learn from it, as an average example, how all the work of human society is performed. I feel a good deal of intellectual hunger nowadays, and if my health would allow, I think there is little doubt that I should make a creditable use of my freedom, in pretty hard study. I hope, even as it is, not to have to remain absolutely idle — and shall try to make whatever reading I can do bear on psychological subjects. . . .

Wendell Holmes and John Gray were on here last Saturday and Sunday, and seemed in very jolly spirits at being turned out to pasture from their Boston pen. I should

think Wendell worked too hard. Gray is going to Lenox for a fortnight, but W. is to take no vacation.

During the month of July we had the good fortune to have as fellow boarders Mr. Boott and his daughter from Boston. Miss B., although not overpoweringly beautiful, is one of the very best members of her sex I ever met. She spent the first eighteen years of her life in Europe, and has of course Italian, French and German at her fingers' ends, and I never realized before how much a good education (I mean in its common sense of a wide information) added to the charms of a woman. She has a great talent for drawing, and was very busy painting here, which, as she is in just about the same helpless state in which I was when I abandoned the art, made her particularly interesting to me. You had better come home soon and make her acquaintance — for you know these first-class young spinsters do not *always* keep for ever, although on the whole they tend to, in Boston.

The successors to the Bootts in this house are Gen. Casey (of "Infantry Tactics" notoriety) and spouse. He is an amiable but mildish old gentleman, and about thirty years older than his wife. I'm glad, on the whole, that General Grant, and not he, was our commander in the late war.

If you want some good light German reading, let me advise you to try at least the first half of Jung-Stilling's autobiography. He was a pious German who lived through the latter half of the last century, and wrote with the utmost vividness and naïveté all his experiences, that the glory of God's Providence might be increased. I read it with great delight a few weeks since; it merits the adjective *fresh* as well as most books.

I saw Jeffries Wyman a short time before leaving. He

said he had heard from you. I'd give much to hear from your lips an account of your plans, hopes and so forth, as well as the *Ergebnisse* of the past year. I was truly glad to hear of your determination to stick to physiology. However discouraging the work of each day may seem, stick at it long enough, and you'll wake up some morning — a physiologist — just as the man who takes a daily drink finds himself unexpectedly a drunkard. I wish I'd asked you sooner to send me a photograph of Bernard and Vulpian — or any other Parisian medical men worth having — is it too late now? — and too late for Pflüger? I address this still to Bonn, supposing they'll send it after you if you've gone.

Write soon to yours affectionately,

WM. JAMES.

*To Miss Mary Tappan.*

*Sunday, April 26 [1870?].*

MY DEAR MARY,— Mother says she met you in town this morning, looking more lovely than ever, but — *with your bonnet on the back of your head!*

I hope that this is a mistake. Mother's eyesight is growing fallacious and frequently leads her to see what she would like to see. I cannot think that you would submit to be swayed in your own views of right bonnet-wearing by the mere vociferation of persons like her and Alice, especially when you had heard *me* expressly say I agreed with you that the forehead is the truly ladylike place for a bonnet. Enough! — I waded out to Cambridge from your party. If you enjoyed yourselves as much as I did (but I'm afraid you did n't) you will keep on giving them. Somehow your part of the town is very inaccessible to me or I should fre-

quently bore you. Hoping, in spite of this fearful mother story today, that you are still unsophisticated, I am always yours affectionately,

WM. JAMES.

You need not answer this.

[*Across top of first page*]

Written two days ago — kept back from diffidence — sent now because anything is better than this dead silence between us!

*To Henry James.*

CAMBRIDGE, May 7, 1870.

DEAR HARRY,— 'T is Saturday evening, ten minutes past six of the clock and a cold and rainy day (Indian winter, as T. S. P. calls such). I had a fire lighted in my grate this afternoon. There is nevertheless a broken blue spot in the eastern clouds as I look out, and the grass and buds have started visibly since the morning. The trees are half-way out — you of course have long had them in full leaf — and the early green is like a bath to the eyes. Father is gone to Newport for a day, and is expected back within the hour. My jaw is aching badly in consequence of a tooth I had out two days ago, the which refused to be pulled, was broken, but finally extracted, and has left its neighbors prone to ache since. I hope it won't last much longer. I spent the morning, part of it at least, in fishing the "Revues Germaniques" up from [the] cellar, looking over their contents, and placing them volumewise, and flat, in the two top shelves of the big library bookcase *vice* Thies's good old books just removed, the shelves being too low to take any of our books upright. I feel melancholy as a whip-poor-will and took up pen and paper to sigh melodiously to you. But sighs

are hard to express in words. We have been three weeks now without hearing from you, and if a letter does not come tomorrow or Monday, I don't know what'll become of us. Howells brought, a week ago, a long letter you had written to him on the eve of leaving Malvern, so our next will be from London. . . .

My! how I long to see you, and feel of you, and talk things over. I have at last, I think, begun to rise out of the sloughs of the past three months. . . . What a blessing this change of seasons is, as you used to say, especially in the spring. The winter is man's enemy, he must exert himself against it to live, or it will squeeze him in one night out of existence. So it is hateful to a sick man, and all the greater is the peace of the latter when it yields to a time when nature seems to coöperate with life and float one passively on. But I hear Father arriving and I must go down to hear his usual *compte rendu*.<sup>1</sup>

Sunday, 3 P.M.

No letter from you this morning. . . . It seems to me that all a man has to depend on in this world, is, in the last resort, mere brute power of resistance. I can't bring myself, as so many men seem able to, to blink the evil out of sight, and gloss it over. It's as real as the good, and if it is denied, good must be denied too. It must be accepted and hated, and resisted while there's breath in our bodies. . . .

To Henry P. Bowditch.

CAMBRIDGE, Dec. 29, 1870.

MY DEAR HENRY,—Your letter written from Leipzig just before the declaration of war reached me in the country. I have thought of you and of answering you, abundantly,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the description of Henry James, Senior's, home-comings in *A Small Boy and Others*, p. 72.

ever since; but have mostly been prevented by sheer physical *imbecillitas*. Now I am ashamed of such a state, and shall write you a page or so a day till the letter is finished. I have had no idea all this time where or what you have been, traveler, student, or medical army officer. You may imagine how excited I was at the beginning of the war. I had not dared to hope for such a complete triumph of poetic justice as occurred. Now I feel much less interested in the success of the Germans, first because I think it's time that the principle of territorial conquest were abolished, second because success will redound to the credit of autocratic government there, and good as that may happen to be in the particular junctures, it's unsafe and pernicious in the long run. Moreover, if France succeeds in beating off the Germans now, I should think there would be some chance of the peace being kept between them hereafter — the French will have gained an insight they never had of the horrors of a war of conquest, and some degree of loathing for it in the abstract; and they will not have to fight to regain their honor. Moreover, I should like to see the republic succeed. But if Alsace and Lorraine be taken, there *must* be another war, for them and for honor. On the other hand, justice seems to demand a permanent penalty for the political immorality of France. So that there will be enough good to console one for the bad, whichever way it turns out. . . .

31st.

As I said, I have no idea of how the war may have affected your movements and occupations. It did my heart good to hear of the solid and businesslike way in which you were working at Leipzig, and I should think [that], with Ludwig and the laboratory, you would feel like giving it another winter — though the other attractions of Berlin and Vienna



must pull you rather strongly away. I heard a rumor the other day that Lombard's place was being kept for you here. I hope it's true, for your sake and that of Boston. Thank you very much for the photographs of Ludwig and Fechner. I have enjoyed Ludwig's face very much, he must be a good fellow; and Fechner, down to below the orbits, has a strange resemblance to Jeffries Wyman. I have quite a decent nucleus of a physiognomical collection now, and any further contributions it may please you to make to it will be most thankfully received.

J. Wyman I have not seen since his return. Such is the state of brutal social isolation which characterizes this community! Partly sickness, partly a morbid shrinking from the society of anyone who is alive intellectually are to blame, however, in my case. I, as I wrote, am long since dead and buried in that respect. I fill my belly for about four hours daily with husks,—newspapers, novels and biographies, but thought is tabooed,—and you can imagine that conversation with Wyman should only intensify the sense of my degradation.

*Jan. 23, 1871.*

Since my last date I have been unable to write until today, and now, I think, to make sure of the letter going at all, I had better cut it short and send it off to your father to direct. I have indeed nothing particular to communicate, and only want to give you assurance of my undying affection. This morning 4 degrees below zero, and N.W. wind. Don't you wish you were here to enjoy the sunshine of it? A batch of telegrams in the "Advertiser," showing that France must soon throw up the sponge. Faiderbe licked at St. Quentin, Bourbaki pursued, Chanzy almost disintegrated, and Paris frozen and starved out. Well, so be it! only the German liberals will have the harder battle to

fight at home for the next twenty years. I suspect that England, irresolute and unhandsome as is the figure she makes externally, is today in a healthier state than any country in Europe. She is renovating herself socially, and although she may be eclipsed during these days of "militarismus," yet when they depart, as surely they must some time, from sheer exhaustion, she will be ready to take the lead by influence. I know of no news here to tell you. I suppose you get the "Nation," which keeps up well, notwithstanding its monotony. I shall be expecting to fold you to my bosom some time next summer. Heaven speed the day! Write me as soon as you get this. You have n't the same excuse for silence that I have. Speak of your work, your plans and the war. Good bye, old fellow, and believe me, ever your friend,

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry P. Bowditch.*

CAMBRIDGE, Apr. 8, 1871.

. . . So the gallant Gauls are shooting each other again! I wish we knew what it all meant. From the apparent generality of the movement in Paris, it seems as if it must be something more dignified than it at first appeared. But can anything great be expected now from a nation between the two factions of which there is such hopeless enmity and mistrust as between the religious and the revolutionary parties in France? No mediation is possible between them. In England, America and Germany, a regular advance is possible, because each man confides in his brothers. However great the superficial differences of opinion, there is at bottom a trust in the power of the deep forces of human nature to work out their salvation, and the minority is contented to bide its time. But in France, nothing of the sort; no one

feels secure against what he considers evil, by any guaranty but force; and if his opponents get uppermost, he thinks all is forever lost. How much Catholic education is to answer for this and how much national idiosyncrasy, it is hard to say. But I am inclined to think the latter is a large factor. The want of true sympathy in the French character, their love of external mechanical order, their satisfaction in police-regulation, their everlasting cry of "traitor," all point to it. But, on the other hand, protestantism would seem to have a good deal to do with the fundamental cohesiveness of society in the countries of Germanic blood. For what may be called the revolutionary party there has *developed* through insensible grades of rationalism out of the old orthodox conceptions, religious and social. The process has been a continuous modification of positive belief, and the extremes, even if they had no respect for each other and no desire for mutual accommodation (which I think at bottom they have), would yet be kept from cutting each other's throats by the intermediate links. But in France Belief and Denial are separated by a chasm. The step once made, "*écrasez l'infâme*" is the only watchword on each side. How any order is possible except by a Cæsar to hold the balance, it is hard to see. But I don't want to dose you with my crude speculations. This difference was brought home vividly to me by reading yesterday in the "*Revue des Deux Mondes*" for last December a splendid little story, "*Histoire d'un Sous-Maître*," by Erckmann-Chatrian, and what was uppermost in my mind came out easiest in writing.

I shall be overjoyed to see you in September, but expect to hear from you many a time ere then. I see little medical society, none in fact; but hope to begin again soon. [R. H.] Fitz, I believe, is showing great powers in "Pathology"

since his return. And I hear a place in the school is being kept warm for you on your return. Count me for an auditor. I invested yesterday in a ticket for a course of "University" lectures on "Optical Phenomena and the Eye," by B. Joy Jeffries, to be begun out here tomorrow. It's the first mingling in the business of life which I have done since my return home. Wyman is in Florida till May. He has an obstinate cough and seems anxious about his lungs. I hope he'll be spared, though, many a long year.

Ever yours truly,

WM. JAMES.

*To Charles Renouvier.*

CAMBRIDGE, Nov. 2, 1872.

MONSIEUR,— Je viens d'apprendre par votre "Science de la Morale," que l'ouvrage de M. Lequier, auquel vous faites renvoi dans votre deuxième Essai de Critique, n'a jamais été mis en vente. Ceci explique l'insuccès avec lequel j'ai pendant longtemps tâché de me le procurer par la voie de la librairie.

Serait-ce trop vous demander, s'il vous restait encore des exemplaires, de m'en envoyer un, que je présenterais, après l'avoir lu, en votre nom, à la bibliothèque Universitaire de cette ville?

Si l'édition est déjà épuisée, ne vous mettez pas en peine de me répondre, et que le vif intérêt que je prends à vos idées serve d'excuse à ma demande. Je ne peux pas laisser échapper cette occasion de vous dire toute l'admiration et la reconnaissance que m'ont inspirée la lecture de vos Essais (sauf le 3me, que je n'ai pas encore lu). Grâce à vous, je possède pour la première fois une conception intelligible et raisonnable de la Liberté. Je m'y suis rangé à peu près. Sur d'autres points de votre philosophie il me

reste encore des doutes, mais je puis dire que par elle je commence à renaître à la vie morale; et croyez, monsieur, que ce n'est pas une petite chose!

Chez nous, c'est la philosophie de Mill, Bain, et Spencer qui emporte tout à présent devant lui. Elle fait d'excellents travaux en psychologie, mais au point de vue pratique elle est déterministe et matérialiste, et déjà je crois apercevoir en Angleterre les symptômes d'une renaissance de la pensée religieuse. Votre philosophie par son côté phénoméniste semble très propre à frapper les esprits élevés dans l'école empirique anglaise, et je ne doute pas dès qu'elle sera un peu mieux connue en Angleterre et dans ce pays, qu'elle n'ait un assez grand retentissement. Elle paraît faire son chemin lentement; mais je suis convaincu que chaque année nous rapprochera du jour où elle sera reconnue de tous comme étant la plus forte tentative philosophique que le siècle ait vue naître en France, et qu'elle comptera toujours comme un des grands jalons dans l'histoire de la speculation. Dès que ma santé (depuis quelques années très mauvaise) me permet un travail intellectuel un peu sérieux, je me propose d'en faire une étude plus approfondie et plus critique, et d'en donner un compte-rendu dans une de nos revues. Si donc, monsieur, il se trouve un exemplaire encore disponible de la "Rech[erche] d'une première Verité," j'oserai vous prier de l'envoyer à l'adresse de la librairie ci-incluse, en écrivant mon nom sur la couverture. M. Galette soldera tous les frais, s'il s'en trouve.

Veuillez encore une fois, cher monsieur, croire aux sentiments d'admiration et de haut respect avec lesquels je suis votre très obéissant serviteur,

WILLIAM JAMES.

## VII

1872-1878

### *First Years of Teaching*

IN 1872 President Eliot wished to provide instruction in physiology and hygiene for the Harvard undergraduates, and looked about him for instructors. He had formed an impression of James ten years before which, as he said, "was later to become useful to Harvard University," and in the interval he had known him as a Cambridge neighbor and had been aware of the direction his interests had taken. He proposed that James and Dr. Thomas Dwight — a young anatomist who was also to become an eminent teacher — should share in the new undertaking. In August, 1872, the College appointed James "Instructor in Physiology," to conduct three exercises a week "during half of the ensuing academic year." Thus began a service in the University which was to be almost continuously active and engrossing until 1907.

The fact that James began by teaching anatomy and physiology, passed thence to psychology, and last to philosophy, has been wrongly cited as if his interest in each successive subject of his college work had been the fruit of his experience in teaching the preceding subject. This inference from the mere sequence of events will appear strange to attentive readers of what has gone before. Indeed, if the fact that James devoted a good share of his time to physiology in the seventies calls for remark at all, it should be noted that his subject, from soon after the beginning, was really physiological psychology, and that — more

interesting than anything else in this connection — one may discern a patient surrender to limitations imposed by the state of his health on the one hand, and on the other a sound sense of the value of physiology to psychological investigations and so to philosophy, as both underlying the sequence of events in his teaching. Whatever may have been the succession of his college "courses," psychology and philosophy were never divorced from each other in his thought or in his writings. Thus it is interesting to find, that at the very moment of his engagement to teach physiology, — at a date intermediate between the appointment and the commencement of the course in fact, — he wrote to his brother, "If I were well enough, now would be my chance to strike at Harvard College, for Peterson has just resigned his sub-professorship of philosophy, and I know of no very formidable opponent. But it's impossible. I keep up a small daily pegging at my physiology, whose duties don't begin till January, and which I shall find easy, I think."

He had needed definite duties and responsibilities and more or less recognized his need; so he undertook to teach a subject which, though congenial and interesting, lay distinctly off the path of his deepest inclination.

The first three fragments that follow refer to his preparation for the plunge into teaching. The course on Comparative Anatomy and Physiology was given by Dwight and James under the general head of Natural History and was an "elective" open to Juniors and Seniors. "As the course was experimental and a part of the new expansion of the Elective System," writes President Eliot, "the President and the Faculty were interested in the fact that the new course under these two young instructors attracted 28 Juniors and 25 Seniors."

*To Henry James.*

SCARBORO, *Aug. 24, 1872.*

. . . The appointment to teach physiology is a perfect God-send to me just now, an external motive to work, which yet does not strain me — a dealing with men instead of my own mind, and a diversion from those introspective studies which had bred a sort of philosophical hypochondria in me of late and which it will certainly do me good to drop for a year. . . .

CAMBRIDGE, *Nov. 24, 1872.*

. . . I go into the Medical School nearly every morning to hear Bowditch lecture, or paddle round in his laboratory. It is a noble thing for one's spirits to have some responsible work to do. I enjoy my revived physiological reading greatly, and have in a corporeal sense been better for the past four or five weeks than I have been at all since you left. . . .

CAMBRIDGE, *Feb. 13, 1873.*

. . . This morning arose, went to Brewer's to get two partridges to garnish our cod-fish dinner. Bought at Richardson's an "Appleton's Journal" containing part of "Bressant," a novel by Julian Hawthorne, to send Bob Temple. At 10.30 arrived your letter of January 26th, which was a very pleasant continuation of your *Aufenthalt* in Rome. At 12.30, after reading an hour in Flint's "Physiology," I went to town, paid a bill of Randidge's, looked into the Athenæum reading-room, got one dozen raw oysters at Higgins's saloon in Court Street, came out again, thermometer having risen to near thawing point, dozed half an hour before the fire, and am now writing this to you.

I am enjoying a two weeks' respite from tuition, the boys



being condemned to pass examinations, in which I luckily take no part at present. I find the work very interesting and stimulating. It presents two problems, the intellectual one — how best to state your matter to them; and the practical one — how to govern them, stir them up, not bore them, yet make them work, etc. I should think it not unpleasant as a permanent thing. The authority is at first rather flattering to one. So far, I seem to have succeeded in interesting them, for they are admirably attentive, and I hear expressions of satisfaction on their part. Whether it will go on next year can't at this hour, for many reasons, be decided. I have done almost absolutely no visiting this winter, and seen hardly anyone or heard anything till last week, when a sort of frenzy took possession of me and I went to a symphony concert and thrice to the theatre. A most lovely English actress, young, innocent, refined, has been playing Juliet, which play I enjoyed most intensely, though it was at the Boston Theatre and her support almost as poor as it could have been. Neilson is she hight. I ne'er heard of her before. A rival American beauty has been playing a stinking thing of Sardou's ("Agnes") at the Globe, which disgusted me with cleverness. Her name is Miss Ethel, and she is a ladylike but depressing phenomenon, all made up of nerves and American insubstantiality. I have read hardly anything of late, some of the immortal Wordsworth's "Excursion" having been the best. I have simply shaken hands with Gray since his engagement, and have only seen Holmes twice this winter. I fear he is at last feeling the effects of his overwork. . . .

CAMBRIDGE, *Apr.* 6, 1873.

. . . I have been cut out all this winter from the men with whom I used to gossip on generalities, Holmes, Putnam,

Peirce, Shaler, John Gray and, last not least, yourself. I rather hanker after it, Bowditch being almost the only man I have seen anything of this winter, and that at his laboratory. . . . Child and I have struck up quite an intimacy. . . . T. S. Perry is my only surviving crony. He dines pretty regular once a week here. . . . Ever your affectionate

W. J.

The next letter, although not from William James, will help to fill out the picture.

*Henry James, Senior, to Henry James.*

CAMBRIDGE, Mar. 18, 1873.

. . . [William] gets on greatly with his teaching; his students — fifty-seven of them — are elated with their luck in having him, and I feel sure he will have next year a still larger number by his fame. He came in the other afternoon while I was sitting alone, and after walking the floor in an animated way for a moment, broke out: "Bless my soul, what a difference between me as I am now and as I was last spring at this time! Then so hypochondriacal" — he used that word, though perhaps less in substance than form — "and now with my mind so cleared up and restored to sanity. It's the difference between death and life."

He had a great effusion. I was afraid of interfering with it, or possibly checking it, but I ventured to ask what especially in his opinion had produced the change. He said several things: the reading of Renouvier (particularly his vindication of the freedom of the will) and of Wordsworth, whom he has been feeding on now for a good while; but more than anything else, his having given up the notion

that all mental disorder requires to have a physical basis. This had become perfectly untrue to him. He saw that the mind does act irrespectively of material coercion, and could be dealt with therefore at first hand, and this was health to his bones. It was a splendid declaration, and though I had known from unerring signs of the fact of the change, I never had been more delighted than by hearing of it so unreservedly from his own lips. He has been shaking off his respect for men of mere science as such, and is even more universal and impartial in his mental judgments than I have known him before. . . .

James's first Harvard appointment had been for one year only. In the spring of 1873 the question of its renewal on somewhat different terms came up. President Eliot informed him that the College wished some one man to give the instruction which he and Dr. Dwight had shared between them, and offered him the whole course, including the anatomy.

It cost him "some perplexity to make the decision." He thought he saw that such an instructorship "might easily grow into a permanent biological appointment, to succeed Wyman, perhaps." At first he resolved "to fight it out on the line of mental science," feeling that "with such arrears of lost time behind [him] and such curtailed power of work," he could no longer "afford to make so considerable an expedition into the field of anatomy." But when he then considered himself as a possible future teacher of philosophy, he was overwhelmed by a feeling which he recorded on a page of his diary: "Philosophical activity *as a business* is not normal for most men, and not for me. . . . To make the *form* of all possible thought the prevailing *matter* of one's thought breeds hypochondria. Of course

my deepest interest will, as ever, lie with the most general problems. But . . . my strongest moral and intellectual craving is for some stable reality to lean upon. . . . That gets reality for us in which we place our responsibility, and the concrete facts in which a biologist's responsibilities lie form a fixed basis from which to aspire as much as he pleases to the mastery of universal questions when the gallant mood is on him; and a basis too upon which he can passively float and tide over times of weakness and depression, trusting all the while blindly in the beneficence of nature's forces, and the return of higher opportunities." Accordingly he determined to give himself to biology, reporting to his brother Henry, who was at that time in Europe, "I am not a strong enough man to choose the other and nobler lot in life, but I can in a less penetrating way work out a philosophy in the midst of the other duties. . . ."

As the summer went on, he still had misgivings that he would not be strong enough to prepare and conduct the laboratory demonstrations necessary for a large class in comparative anatomy and physiology. He saw that his first year of teaching had been "of great moral service to him," but thought that in other ways the strain and fatigue had been a brake upon the rate of his wished-for improvement. He therefore made up his mind to postpone the instructorship for a year and go abroad once more.

These hesitations, and a few months in Europe, marked the end of the period of morbid depression through which the reader has been following him. He returned to America eager for work.

Meanwhile parts of four letters written while he was abroad may be given.

*To his Family.*

ON BOARD S.S. SPAIN, Oct. 17, 1873.

DEAREST FAMILY,— I begin my Queenstown letter now because the first section of the voyage seems to be closing. The delicious warm stern wind, cloudy sky and smooth sea which we have had, unlike anything I remember on the Atlantic, threatens to change into something less agreeable, for the wind is fresh ahead, and the waves all capped with white and the vessel begins to roll more and more. Hitherto she has not rolled an inch, and all our days have been spent on deck, and I have enjoyed less sickness than ever before; though I must say I loathe the element. I am confirmed in my preference for big boats, and shall probably try one of the Inman line when I return, as this, sweet Alice, is rather Cunardy as to its table and sitting accommodations. Miss K—— and her two friends sit opposite me at meals and seem to ply a good knife and fork. The other passengers are inoffensive and quiet, with the exception of my roommate, who is a fine fellow, and a lovely young missionary going to the Gabun coast to convert the niggers — a fearful waste of herself, one is tempted to think. There are eleven missionaries on board, and a young lady who is traveling with a party of them and confided to me yesterday that she dreaded it was her doom to become one too. My chum is a graduate of Bowdoin College, going to study two years in Europe on money which he made during his vacations by peddling quack medicines of his own concoction, and cutting corns. He has supported himself four years in this way, and *abgesehen* from the swindle of his life in vacation time, is an honor to his native land, without prejudices and full of animal spirits, wit and intelligence. We wash in the same basin. He has never tasted spirituous liquor. I am also intimate with a French commercial traveler,

incredibly ignorant, but extremely good-natured and gentlemanly. I have now determined to stick to the missionary as close as possible. She is twenty-four years old and very beautiful. I finished the "Strange Adventures of a Phaeton" yesterday. A perfectly beautiful book, beside which "Goodbye, Sweetheart," which I have begun, tastes coarse.

Good-bye. I hope a storm won't arise, but if it does, I'm glad enough to be in such an extraordinarily steady ship. I pity you at home without me, and long to pat the rich, creamy throat of little sister. (Expression derived from "Goodbye, Sweetheart.")

*Friday Morn.*

Ach! I thought yesterday was Friday, but found in the evening that it was only Thursday. No matter, six days are now past. As I predicted, the sea grew pretty big before sundown and the ship has been skipping about all night like a lively kitten. But her motion is delightfully easy, and no one, so far as I can see, has been sick. I never was better in my life than yesterday made me. Nevertheless, little Sister, in looking at the black waves with their skin of silver lace I have regretted saying that safety was a minor consideration with me. I doubt in my heart that even comfort is to be preferred to danger. The sea looks too indigestible — the all-digesting sea! I threw away "Goodbye, Sweetheart" at the 40th page and have begun the "Tour of the World in Eighty Days," a much better book. I am sorry that the little beauty's care for her Bro.'s comfort did not go so far as to provide him with a needle-and-thread-book, etc. *True* sympathy divines wants; and a sister who could not foresee that in three days her bro. should be driven to borrowing Miss K — 's needle-book to sew on his buttons cannot be said to be in very close magnetic relations with him. I lurched about the deck arm in

arm with the young missionary yestreen. I told her that, if I were a missionary, instead of going to the most unhealthy part of Africa, I would choose, say, Paris for a field. She, all unconscious of the subtle humor of my remark, said, "Oh, yes! there are fearful numbers of heathen there!" I have just rolled out of bed and into my clothes, and write this in my stateroom, but can stand no longer its aromatic air and hasten to say good-bye and mount to the deck. . . . Good-bye, good-bye. Ever your loving

W. J.

On landing, James proceeded to Florence, to join his brother Henry for a winter in Italy.

*To his Sister.*

FLORENCE, Oct. 29 [1873].

12 midnight.

BELoved SWEETLINGTON,— At this solemn hour I can't go to sleep without remembering thee and thy beauty. I have just arrived from an eleven-hours ride from Turin, pouring rain all the way. Ditto yesterday during my twenty-two-hours ride from Paris. The Angel sleeps in number 39 hard by, all unwitting that I, the Demon (or perhaps you have already begun in your talks to distinguish me from him as the Archangel), am here at last. I would n't for worlds disturb this his last independent slumber.

Not having seen the sun but for three days (on board ship) since the eleventh, the natural gloom of my disposition and circumstances has been much aggravated. And I had in London and Paris a pretty melancholy time. I stayed but two days and one night in the latter place, which, according to the law of opposition that rules your opinions and mine, seemed to me a very tedious place. Its Hauss-

manization has produced a terribly monotonous-looking city — no expression of having *grown*, in any of the quarters I visited, and I did not have time to bring to the surface what power I may possess of sympathizing with the French way of being and doing. The awful thin and slow dinner in the tremendously imperial dining-room of the Hôtel du Louvre, the exaggerated neatness and order and reglementation of everything visible, contrasted with the volcanic situation of things at the present moment, all a-kinder turned my plain Yankee stomach, which has not yet recovered from the simpler lessons of joy it learnt at Scarborough and Magnolia last summer. I went to the Théâtre Français and heard a play in verse of Ponsard, thin stuff splendidly represented. Altogether I don't care if I never go to Paris again. London "impressed" me twelve times as much. Today in Italy my spirits have riz. The draggletailed physiognomy of the railway stations on the way here, the beautifully good-natured easy-going expression on the faces of the railway officials, the charming dialogue I have just had with the aged but angelic chambermaid whose phrases I managed to understand the sense of as a whole without recognizing any particular words — together with the consciousness of having for a time come to my journey's end and of the certainty of breakfasting tomorrow with the Angel, all let me go to bed with a light heart; hoping that yours is as much so, beloved Alice and all. . . .

*To his Sister.*

FLORENCE, Nov. 23, 1873.

BELOVED SISTERKIN,— Your "nice long letter," as you call it, of Oct. 26 reached me five days ago, Mother's of November 4th yesterday, and with it one from Father to Harry. Though you will probably disbelieve me, I cannot



help stating how agreeable it is to me to be once more in regular communication with that which, in spite of all shortcomings, is all that has ever been vouchsafed to me in the way of a "home" (and a mother). The hotel in which we live here is anything but home-like. In fact, when the heart aches for cosiness, etc., all it can do is to turn out into the street.

I begin to feel, too, strongly that at my time of life, with such a set of desultory years behind, what a man most wants is to be settled and concentrated, to cultivate a patch of ground which may be humble but still is his own. Here all this dead civilization crowding in upon one's consciousness forces the mind open again even as the knife the unwilling oyster — and what my mind wants most now is practical tasks, not the theoretical digestion of additional masses of what to me are raw and disconnected empirical materials. I feel like one still obliged to eat more and more grapes and pears and pineapples, when the state of the system imperiously demands a fat Irish stew, or something of that sort. I knew it all before I came, however; and I hope in a fortnight to be able comparatively to disregard what lies about me and get interested in the physiological books I brought. So far I find the pictures, etc., drive my thoughts far away. I have just been reading a big German octavo, Burkhardt's "Renaissance in Italy," with the title of which you may enrich your historical consciousness, though I hardly think you need read the book. This is the place for history. I don't see how, if one lived here, historical problems could help being the most urgent ones for the mind. It would suit you admirably. Even art comes before one here much more as a problem — how to account for its development and decline — than as a refreshment and an edification. I really think that end is better served by

the stray photographs which enter our houses at home, finding us in the midst of our work and surprising us.

But here I am pouring out this one-sided splenetic humor upon you without having the least intended it when I sat down. Your pen accidentally slips into a certain vein and you must go on till you get it out clearly. If you had heard me telling Harry two or three times lately that I feared the fatal fascination of this place,—that I began to feel it taking little stitches in my soul,—you would have a different impression of my state than my above written words have left upon you. . . . I went out intending to stroll in the Boboli Garden, a wonderful old piece of last-century stateliness, but found it shut till twelve. So I returned to Harry's room, where I sit by the pungent wood fire writing this letter which I did not expect to begin till the afternoon, while he, just at this moment rising from the table where his quill has been busily scratching away at the last pages of his Turgenieff article, comes to warm his legs and puts on another log. . . .

Good-bye beloved Sister, and Father and Mother. . . . Write repeatedly such nice long letters, and make glad the heart of both the Angel and the other brother,

W. J.

*To his Sister.*

ROME, Dec. 17, 1873.

BELOVED BEAUTLINGTON,—I cannot retire to rest on this eve of a well-filled day without imparting to thy noble nature a tithe of the enjoyment and happiness with which I am filled, and wishing you<sup>2</sup> was here to take your share in it. . . . The barbarian mind stretches little by little to take in Rome, but I doubt if I shall ever call it the “city of my soul,” or “my country.” Strange to say, my very enjoy-

ment of what here belongs to hoary eld has done more to reconcile me to what belongs to the present hour, business, factories, etc., etc., than anything I ever experienced. Every day I sally out into the sunshine and plod my way o'er steps of broken thrones and temples until one o'clock, when I repair to a certain café in the Corso, begin to eat and read "Galignani" and the "Débats," until Harry comes in with the flush of successful literary effort fading off his cheek. (It may interest the sympathetic soul of Mother to know that my diet until that hour consists of a roll, which a waiter in wedding costume brings up to my room when I rise, and three sous' worth of big roasted chestnuts, which I buy, on going out, from an old crone a few doors from the hotel. In this respect I am economical. Likewise in my total abstinence from spirituous liquors, to which Harry, I regret to say, has become an utter slave, spending a large part of his earnings in Bass's Ale and wine, and trembling with anger if there is any delay in their being brought to him.) After feeding, the Angel in his old and rather shabby striped overcoat, and I in my usual neat attire, proceed to walk together either to the big Pincian terrace which overhangs the city, and where on certain days everyone resorts, or to different churches and spots of note. I always dine at the table-d'hôte here; Harry sometimes, his indisposition lately (better the past two days) having made him prefer a solitary gorge at the restaurant.

The people in the house are hardly instructive or exciting, but at dinner and for an hour after in the dining-room they very pleasantly kill time. I am become so far Anglicized that I find myself quite fearful of speaking too much to a family of three "cads" who sit opposite me at the table-d'hôte, and of whom the young lady (though rather greasy about the face) is very handsome and intelligent. In the

evening I usually light my fire and read some local book. . . .

I got a note from Hillebrand saying Schiff would gladly let me work in his laboratory if I liked. I suppose I ought if I can, but I hanker after home even at the price of a February voyage, and I hate to spend so much money here on my mere gizzard and cheeks.— There, my sweet sister, I hope that is a sufficiently spirited epistle for 10.30 P.M. When, oh, when, will you write me another like the solitary one I got from you in Florence? Seven weeks and one letter! C'est très caractéristique de vous! I wrote two days ago to Annie Ashburner. Tell the adorable Sara Sedgwick [Mrs. W. E. Darwin] that I can't possibly refrain much longer — in spite of my just resentment — from writing to her. Love to all. . . . Your

W. J.

After his return his college duties proved both absorbing and stimulating. Beginning, as the reader has seen, as an instructor in the Department of Natural History, charged with teaching the comparative anatomy and physiology of vertebrates, he added a course on physiological psychology in 1876, and organized the beginnings of the psychological laboratory.<sup>1</sup> The next year this course was transferred to the Department of Philosophy and given under the title "Psychology." He contributed numerous reviews of scien-

<sup>1</sup> The early history of experimental psychology in America once occasioned discussion. But the discussion seems to have arisen from its being assumed that some particular formality or event should be recognized as marking the coming into being, or the coming of age, of a "Department" or a "Laboratory." James has stated the facts as to the history of the Harvard Laboratory in his own words: "I, myself, 'founded' the instruction in experimental psychology at Harvard in 1874-5, or 1876, I forget which. For a long series of years the laboratory was in two rooms of the Scientific School building, which at last became choked with apparatus, so that a change was necessary. I then, in 1890, resolved on an altogether new departure, raised several thousand dollars, fitted up Dane Hall, and introduced laboratory exercises as a regular part of the undergraduate psychology course."— *Vide Science*, (N. S.) vol. 11, pp. 626, 735. Also, p. 301 *infra*.

tific and philosophic literature, along with a few anonymous articles, to the columns of the "Atlantic Monthly" and the "Nation," and in 1878 appeared in the "Journal of Speculative Philosophy" and the "Critique Philosophique," with three important papers entitled "Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence," "Brute and Human Intellect," and "Quelques Considérations sur la Méthode Subjective."

Meanwhile his correspondence diminished to its minimum. When his brother Henry also came home to America in 1874, it ceased almost entirely. It did not begin to flow freely again, at least so far as letters are now recoverable, until after 1878.

*To Henry James.*

CAMBRIDGE, *June 25, 1874.*

A few days ago came your letter from Florence of June 3, speaking of the glare on the *piazza* and the coolness and space of your rooms, of your late dinners and your solitude, and of the progress of your novel, and, finally, of your expected departure about the 20th; so that I suppose you are today percolating the cool arcades of Bologna or the faded beauties of Verona, or haply [are] at Venice. . . . As the weeks glide by, my present life and my last year's life at home seem to glide together across the five months breach that Italy made in them, and to become continuous; while those months step out of the line and become a sort of side-decoration or picture hanging vaguely in my memory. As this happens more and more, I take the greater pleasure in it. Especially does the utter friendliness of Florence, Rome, etc., grow dear to me, and get strangely mixed up with still earlier and more faded impressions, derived I know not whence, which infused into the places when I first saw them that strange thread of familiarity. The thought of the

Florentine places you name in your letters like "leiser Nachhall längst verklungner Lieder, zieht mit Erinnerungsschauer durch die Brust." I hope you'll pass through Dresden if you sail from Germany. I forgot to say that the Eagle line from Hamburg has now the largest and finest ships and the newest. . . .

Miss Theodora Sedgwick, to whom the next letter is addressed, was a member of the Stockbridge and New York family of that name, and a sister of Mrs. Charles Eliot Norton and Mrs. William Darwin, to whom reference has already been made. At this time she was living with two maiden aunts named Ashburner, friends of James's parents, in a house on Kirkland Street, Cambridge, not far from Mr. Norton's "Shady Hill." The letter of November 14, 1866, contained an allusion to this household, and others will occur as the letters proceed.

*To Miss Theodora Sedgwick.*

CAMBRIDGE, Aug. 8, 1874.

MISS THEODORA SEDGWICK

to WILLIAM JAMES, Dr.

Aug. 6, to 1 Orchestra Seat in Hippodrome [Bar-

num's Circus]	\$1.00
" " " 2 carriage fares at 50c.	\$1.00
" " " 1 glass vanilla cream sodawater	\$ .10
" " " 1 plate of soup lost	\$ .25
" " " 4 hours time at 12½ cents	\$ .50
" " " Sundries	\$ .05
Total	\$2.90
Rec'd on account. \$2.00	

WM. JAMES

HONORED MISS,—I hope you will find the aforesaid charges moderate. When you transmit me the 90 cents

still due, please send back at the same time whatever letters of mine you may still have in your possession, and the diamonds, silks, etc., which you may have at different times been glad to receive from me. Likewise both pieces of the collar stud I so recently lavished upon you. We can then remain as strangers.

I come of a race sensitive in the extreme; more accustomed to treat than to be treated, especially in this manner; and caring for its money as little as for its life. What wonder then that the mercenary conduct of One whom I have ever fostered without hope of pecuniary reward should work like madness in my brain?

On the point of closing I see with rapture that a way of accommodation is still open! O joy! The salmon, blackberries, etc., I consumed, had a market value. By charging me for the tea 90 cents, you will make the thing reciprocal, and I will call the account square. Perhaps even then the dreadful feeling of wounded pride and Barnum-born resentment may with time fade away. Amen. Respectfully yours,  
W. J.

*To Henry James.*

CAMBRIDGE, Jan. [2], 1876.

... Your letter No. 2 speaking of your visit to Turguenieff was received by me duly and greatly enjoyed. I never heard you speak so enthusiastically of any human being. It is too bad he is to leave Paris; but if he gives you the "run" of Flaubert and eke George Sand, it will be so much gained. I don't think you know Miss A —, but if you did, you would thank me for pointing out to you the parallelism between her and George Sand which overwhelmed me the other day when I was calling on her, and she (who has just lost her sister B — and had her father go through an

attack of insanity) was snuggling down so hyper-comfortably into garrulity about B —, and her poor dead T — and her dead mother, that I was fairly suffocated, just as I am by the *comfort* George Sand takes in telling you of the loves of servant men for ladies, and other things *contra naturam*.

Christmas passed off here in a rather wan and sallow manner. I got a gold scarf-ring from Mother and a gold watch-chain from Aunt Kate. Let me, by the way, advise you to get a scarf-ring; 't is one of the greatest inventions of modern times, in saving labor, silk and shirt fronts. Alice got a desk, and from me a Scotch terrier pup only seven weeks old, whom we call Bunch, who has almost doubled his size in a week, who is a perfect lion in determination and courage, and who don't seem to care a jot for any human society but that of Jane in the kitchen, whose person is, I suppose, pervaded by a greasy and smoky smell agreeable to his nostrils. He has a perfect passion for the dining-room; whenever he is left to himself, he travels thither and lies down under the table and takes no notice of you when you go to call him. He does not sleep half as much as Dido, never utters a sound when shut up for the night in the kitchen, and altogether fills us with a sort of awe for the Roman firmness and independence of his character. He is "animated" by a colliquative diarrhœa or cholera, which keeps us all sponging over his tracks, but which don't affect his strength or spirits a bit. He is in short a very queer substitute for poor, dear Dido. . . .

*To Henry James.*

NEWPORT, June 3, 1876.

MY DEAR H.,— I write you after [a] considerable interval filled with too much work and weariness to make letter-writing convenient. . . . I ran away three days ago, the



recitations being over for the year, in order to break from the studious associations of home. I have been staying at the Tweedies with Mrs. Chapman, and James Sturgis and his wife, and enjoying extremely, not the conversation indoors, but the lonely lying on the grass on the cliffs at Lyly Pond, and four or five hours yesterday at the Dumplings, feeling the moving air and the gentle living sea. There is a purity and mildness about the elements here which purges the soul of one. And I have been as if I had taken opium, not wanting to do anything else than the particular thing I happened to be doing at the moment, and feeling equally good whether I stood or walked or lay, or spoke or was silent. It's a splendid relief from the overstrain and stimulus of the past few scholastic months. I go the day after tomorrow (Monday) with the Tweedies to New York, assist at Henrietta Temple's wedding on Tuesday, and then pass on to the Centennial for a couple of days. I suppose it will be pretty tiresome, but I want to see the English pictures, which they say are a good show. . . . I fancy my vacationizing will be confined to visits of a week at a time to different points, perhaps the pleasantest way after all of spending it. Newport as to its villas, and all that, is most repulsive to me. I really did n't know how little charm and how much shabbiness there was about the place. There are not more than three or four houses out of the whole lot that are not offensive, in some way, externally. But the mild nature grows on one every day. This afternoon, God willing, I shall spend on Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

The Tweedies keep no horses, which makes one walk more or pay more than one would wish. The younger Seabury told me yesterday that he was just reading your "Roderick Hudson," but offered no [comment]. Colonel Waring

<sup>1</sup> The name of a rocky promontory near Newport.

said of your "American" to me: "I'm not a blind admirer of H. James, Jr., but I said to my wife after reading that first number, 'By Jove, I think he's hit it this time!'" I think myself the thing opens very well indeed, you have a first-rate datum to work up, and I hope you'll do it well.

Your last few letters home have breathed a tone of contentment and domestication in Paris which was very agreeable to get. . . . Your accounts of Ivan Sergeitch are delightful, and I envy you the possession of the young painter's intimacy. Give my best love to Ivan. I read his book which you sent home (foreign books sent by mail pay duty now, though; so send none but good ones), and although the vein of "morbidness" was so pronounced in the stories, yet the mysterious depths which his plummet sounds atone for all. It is the amount of life which a man feels that makes you value his mind, and Turguenieff has a sense of worlds within worlds whose existence is unsuspected by the vulgar. It amuses me to recommend his books to people who mention them as they would the novels of Wilkie Collins. You say we don't notice "Daniel Deronda." I find it extremely interesting. Gwendolen and her spouse are masterpieces of conception and delineation. Her ideal figures are much vaguer and thinner. But her "sapience," as you excellently call it, passes all decent bounds. There is something essentially womanish in the irrepressible garrulity of her moral reflections. Why is it that it makes women feel so good to moralize? Man philosophizes as a matter of business, because he must,—he does it to a purpose and then lets it rest; but women don't seem to get over being tickled at the discovery that they have the faculty; hence the tedious iteration and restlessness of George Eliot's commentary on life. The La Farges are absent. Yours always,

W. J.

Under the title "Bain and Renouvier," James contributed a review containing a brief discussion of free will and determinism to the "Nation" of June 8, 1876. He of course sent a copy to Renouvier. The following letter begins with a reference to Renouvier's acknowledgment. James had been acquainted with Renouvier's work since 1868, when, as the reader will recall, he read a number of the "Année Philosophique," Renouvier's annual survey of contemporary philosophy, for the first time. The diary entry already quoted from the year 1870 has shown what effect Renouvier's essays then had on his mind. His admiration for the elder philosopher was great and he cherished it loyally for the rest of his life. Indeed, in the unfinished manuscript, which was published posthumously as "Some Problems of Philosophy," James looked back at the formative period of his own philosophical thinking and wrote: "Renouvier was one of the greatest of philosophic characters, and but for the decisive impression made on me in the seventies by his masterly advocacy of pluralism I might never have got free from the monistic superstition under which I had grown up." In time he made Renouvier's acquaintance in France and wrote to him often. He examined and discussed his writings with college classes. Occasionally he reported these discussions and read Renouvier's answers to the students. On the other side, Renouvier paid James the compliment of printing or translating several of his papers in the "Critique Philosophique," and thus brought him early to the notice of French readers.

*To Charles Renouvier.*

CAMBRIDGE, July 29, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR,— I am quite overcome by your appreciation of my poor little article in the "Nation." It gratifies

me extremely to hear from your own lips that my apprehension of your thoughts is accurate. In so despicably brief a space as that which a newspaper affords, I could hardly hope to attain any other quality than that, and perhaps clearness. I had written another paragraph of pure eulogy of your powers, which the editor suppressed, to my great regret, for want of room. I need not repeat to you again how grateful I feel to you for all I have learned from your admirable writings. I do what lies in my feeble power to assist the propagation of your works here, but *students* of philosophy are rare here as everywhere. It astonishes me, nevertheless, that you have had to wait so long for general recognition. Only a few months ago I had the pleasure of introducing to your "Essais" two *professors* of philosophy, able and learned men, who hardly knew your name!! But I am perfectly convinced that it is a mere affair of time, and that you will take your place in the general History of Speculation as the classical and finished representative of the tendency which was begun by Hume, and to which writers before you had made only fragmentary contributions, whilst you have fused the whole matter into a solid, elegant and definitive system, perfectly consistent, and capable, by reason of its moral vitality, of becoming popular, so far as that is permitted to philosophic systems. After your Essays, it seems to me that the only important question is the deepest one of all, the one between the principle of contradiction, and the *Sein und Nichts*.<sup>1</sup> You have brought it to that clear issue; and extremely as I value your logical attitude, it would be uncandid of me (after what I have said) not to confess that there are certain psychological and moral facts, which make me, as I stand today, unable wholly to commit myself to your position,

<sup>1</sup> Being and Non-Being.

to burn my ships behind me, and proclaim the belief in the *one* and the many to be the Original Sin of the mind. I long for leisure to study up these questions. I have been teaching anatomy and physiology in Harvard College here. Next year, I add a course of physiological psychology, using, for certain practical reasons, Spencer's "Psychology" as a textbook. My health is not strong; I find that laboratory work and study, too, are more than I can attend to. It is therefore not impossible that I may in 1877-8 be transferred to the philosophical department, in which there is likely to be a vacancy. If so, you may depend upon it that the name of Renouvier will be as familiar as that of Descartes to the Bachelors of Arts who leave these walls. Believe me with the greatest respect and gratitude, faithfully yours,

WM. JAMES.

. . . I must add a *vivat* to your "Critique Philosophique," which keeps up so ably and bravely! And although it is probably an entirely superfluous recommendation, I cannot refrain from calling your attention to the most robust of English philosophic writers, [Shadworth] Hodgson, whose "Time and Space" was published in 1865 by Longmans, and whose "Theory of Practice," in two volumes, followed it in 1870.

In connection with the allusion to two professors of philosophy who hardly knew Renouvier's name, it would be fair to say that James was acutely conscious of the prevailing academic conditions. He was, in fact, one among a few younger men who were already rejuvenating the teaching of philosophy in American colleges. They began their work under difficult conditions.

Dr. G. Stanley Hall wrote an open letter to the "Nation" in 1876, in which he said: —

"I have often wished that the 'Nation' would devote

some space to the condition of philosophy in American colleges. Within the last few years I have visited the class-rooms of many of our best institutions, and believe that there are few if any branches which are so inadequately taught as those generally roughly classed as philosophy. Deductive logic, or the syllogism, is the most thoroughly dwelt upon, while induction, æsthetic and psychological and ethical studies, and especially the history of the leading systems of philosophy, ancient and modern, and the marvellous new developments in England and Germany, are almost entirely ignored. The persistent use of Hamilton, Butler's 'Analogy' and a score of treatises on 'moral science,' which deduce all the ground of obligation from theological considerations, as text-books, is largely responsible for the supposed unpopularity of the studies. . . . I think the success which has attended the recent lecture courses at Cambridge on modern systems of philosophy, and on æsthetic studies of literature and the fine arts, shows plainly how much might be accomplished in this direction by the proper method of instruction."

James's comment on this, printed anonymously in the "Nation" for September 21, 1876, expressed his view of the situation more fully:—

"The philosophical teaching, as a rule, in our higher seminaries is in the hands of the president, who is usually a minister of the Gospel, and, as he more often owes his position to general excellence of character and administrative faculty than to any speculative gifts or propensities, it usually follows that 'safeness' becomes the main characteristic of his tuition; that his classes are edified rather than awakened, and leave college with the generous youthful impulse, to reflect on the world and our position in it, rather dampened and discouraged than stimulated by the lifeless

discussions and flabby formulas they have had to commit to memory. . . .

"Let it not be supposed that we are prejudging the question whether the final results of speculation will be friendly or hostile to the formulas of Christian thought. All we contend for is that we, like the Greeks and the Germans, should now attack things as if there were no official answer preoccupying the field. At present we are bribed beforehand by our reverence or dislike for the official answer; and the free-thinking tendency which the 'Popular Science Monthly,' for example, represents, is condemned to an even more dismal shallowness than the spiritualistic systems of our text-books of 'Mental Science.' We work with one eye on our problem, and with the other on the consequences to our enemy or to our lawgiver, as the case may be; the result in both cases is mediocrity.

"If the best use of our colleges is to give young men a wider openness of mind and a more flexible way of thinking than special technical training can generate, then we hold that philosophy (taken in the broad sense in which our correspondent uses the word) is the most important of all college studies. However skeptical one may be of the attainment of universal truths (and to make our position more emphatic, we are willing here to concede the extreme Positivistic position), one can never deny that philosophic study means the habit of always seeing an alternative, of not taking the usual for granted, of making conventionalities fluid again, of imagining foreign states of mind. In a word, it means the possession of mental perspective. Touchstone's question, 'Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?' will never cease to be one of the tests of a well-born nature. It says, Is there space and air in your mind, or must your companions gasp for breath whenever they

talk with you? And if our colleges are to make men, and not machines, they should look, above all things, to this aspect of their influence. . . .

"As for philosophy, technically so called, or the reflection of man on his relations with the universe, its educational essence lies in the quickening of the spirit to its *problems*. What doctrines students take from their teachers are of little consequence provided they catch from them the living, philosophic attitude of mind, the independent, personal look at all the data of life, and the eagerness to harmonize them. . . .

"In short, philosophy, like Molière, claims her own where she finds it. She finds much of it today in physics and natural history, and must and will educate herself accordingly. . . . Meanwhile, when we find announced that the students in Harvard College next year may study any or all of the following works under the guidance of different professors,—Locke's 'Essay,' Kant's 'Kritik,' Schopenhauer and Hartmann, Hodgson's 'Theory of Practice,' and Spencer's 'Psychology,' — we need not complain of universal academic stagnation, even today."



## VIII

1878-1883

### *Marriage — Contract for the Psychology — European Colleagues — Death of his Parents*

EARLY in 1876 James had been introduced by their common friend Thomas Davidson (that ardent and lovable man whom he sketched with incomparable strokes in "A Knight Errant of the Intellectual Life") to Miss Alice H. Gibbens, and the next day he wrote to his brother Wilky that he had met "the future Mrs. W. J." Miss Gibbens had grown up in Weymouth, a pleasant little Massachusetts town in which several generations of her ancestors had lived comfortably and which was then still untouched by the "development" that later converted it and its neighbour, Quincy, into unseemly stone-quarriers' suburbs. In 1876 she had just returned, with her widowed mother and two younger sisters, from a five-years' residence in Europe and was teaching in a school for girls in Boston. On July 10, 1878, after a short engagement, he and Miss Gibbens were married by the Reverend Rufus Ellis at the house of the bride's grandmother in Boston.

It must be left to a later day and a less intimate and partial hand to do adequate justice to a marriage which was happy in the rarest and fullest sense, and which was soon to work an abiding transformation in James's health and spirits. No mere devotion could have achieved the skill and care with which his wife understood and helped him. Family duties and responsibilities, often grave and worrisome enough, weighed lightly in the balance against the

tranquillity and confidence that his new domesticity soon brought him. During the twenty-one years that immediately followed his marriage he accomplished an amount of teaching, college committee-service and administration, friendly and helpful personal intercourse with his students, reading and book-writing, original research, not to speak of his initial excursions into the field of psychical research, and a good deal of popular lecturing to eke out his income, that would have astonished anyone who had known him only during the early seventies, and that would have honored the capacity and endurance of any man. The serener tone of his letters soon contrasts itself with much that has gone before. The occasional references to fatigue, insomnia, and eye-strain, which still occur in his correspondence are explained by the amount of work he imposed upon himself rather than by the lack of strength with which he met his tasks.

Meanwhile his wife, who entered into all his plans and undertakings with unfailing understanding and high spirit, stood guard over his library door, protected him from interruptions and distractions, managed the household and the children and the family business, helped him to order his day and to see and entertain his friends at convenient times, sped him off on occasional much-needed vacations, and encouraged him to all his major undertakings, with a sustaining skill and cheer which need not be described to anyone who knew his household. To the importance of her companionship it is still, happily, impossible to do justice. If consulted, she would not tolerate even this allusion; yet to gloss over her sustaining influence entirely would be to do injustice to James himself.

The summer of 1878 was momentous in James's life for

another reason. In June, one month before his marriage, he contracted with Messrs. Henry Holt & Company to write a volume on Psychology for the "American Science Series" that they were beginning to publish. He was asked by Mr. Holt, in the course of preliminary correspondence, whether he could deliver the manuscript in a year's time. James replied (June, 1878): "My other engagements and my health both forbid the attempt to execute the work rapidly. Its quality too might then suffer. I don't think I could finish it inside of two years — say the fall of 1880." Thus he proposed to throw the book off rapidly. He doubtless conceived of it in the beginning as a more or less literary survey of the subject as it was then known, and he certainly did not foresee that he was going to devote twelve years of critical study and original research to its preparation.

Meanwhile, immediately after their marriage, James took his wife to the upper end of Keene Valley in the Adirondacks for the rest of the summer. They both knew and loved the region already. Indeed, although there has been no occasion to mention it before, Keene Valley had already become for James the playground toward which he turned most eagerly when summer came. It never lost its charm for him; he managed to spend a week or two of almost every year there or nearby; and allusions to the region will appear in a number of later letters.

At the head of these valleys, in the basin of the Ausable Lakes and on the surrounding slopes of the most interesting group of mountains in the Adirondacks, a great tract of forest has been preserved. Giant, Noonmark, Colvin, and the Gothics raise their splendid ridges and summits to the enclosing horizon, and Dix, Haystack, and Marcy, the

last the highest mountain of the Adirondack range, are within a day's walk of the little community that used to be known as "Beede's." Where the Ausable Club's picturesque golf-course is now laid out, the fields of Smith Beede's farm then surrounded his primitive, white-painted hotel. Half a mile to the eastward, in a patch of rocky pasture beside Giant Brook, stood the original Beede farmhouse, and this Henry P. Bowditch, Charles and James Putnam, and William James had bought for a few hundred dollars (subject to Beede's cautious proviso in the deed that "the purchasers are to keep no boarders"). They had adapted the little story-and-a-half dwelling to their own purposes and converted its surrounding sheds and pens into habitable shanties of the simplest kind. So they established a sort of camp, with the mountains for their climbing, the brook to bathe in, and the primeval forest fragrant about them.

With a friend or native guide,—or often alone, with a book and lunch in his light rucksack,—James would go off for a long day's walk on one of the mountain trails. He liked to start early and to spend several hours at mid-day stretched out on the sheltered side of an open ridge or summit. In this way he would combine a day of outdoor exercise with fifty to eighty pages of professional reading, the daily stint to which he often held himself in his holidays.

In the summer of seventy-eight he planned to combine this sort of refreshment with work on the "Psychology." The plan seemed a little innocent to at least one friend,—Francis J. Child,—who said in a letter to James Russell Lowell: "William has already begun a Manual of Psychology—in the honeymoon;—but they are both writing it."

*To Francis J. Child.*

[Dictated to Mrs. James]

KEENE VALLEY, *Aug.* 16 [1878].

CARISSIMO,—Daily since the first instant have we trembled with joyous expectancy of your holiday face arriving at our door. Daily have we dashed the teardrop of disappointment from our common eye! And now to get a letter instead of your revered form! It is shameful. We are dying with the tedium of each other's society and you would make the wheels of life go round again. Your excursion to Scarborough is simply criminal under the circumstances. You know we longed to see you. It is not too late to repair your fault, for although we shall not outstay the 1st of September, you would find the Putnams and the best thirty-five-year-old medical society in Boston to keep you company after we go. You had better come from Scarborough through Portland direct to Burlington by the White Mt. R.R. From Burlington take boat to Westport, whence stage to Beede's and our beating heart. But such is the crassitude of your malignity that after this we hardly dare expect you. Seriously, how could you be so insane?

As for the remaining matter of your somewhat illegible letter, what is this mythological and poetical talk about psychology and Psyche and keeping back a manuscript composed during a honeymoon? The only Psyche now recognized by science is a decapitated frog whose writhings express deeper truths than your weakminded poets ever dreamed. *She* (not Psyche but the bride) loves all these doctrines which are quite novel to her mind, hitherto accustomed to all sorts of mysticism and superstitions. She swears entirely by reflex action now, and believes in universal *Nothwendigkeit*. Hope not with your ballad-mongering ever to gain an influence.

We have spent, however, a ballad-like summer in this delicious cot among the hills. We only needed crooks and a flock of sheep. I need not say that our psychic reaction has been one of content — perhaps as great as ever enjoyed by man.

So farewell, false friend, till such near time as your ehrwürdig person decorate our hearth at Mrs. Hanks's in Harvard St.

Communicate our hearty love to Mrs. Child and believe us your always doting

(W. and A.) J.

And for Heaven's sake *come* while yet there is time!

WM.

When the College opened in the autumn of seventy-eight James and his wife returned to Cambridge and lived for a few months in lodgings at 387 Harvard Street. The next letter begins a series from which a number of later letters will be given. One of the warmest of James's lifelong friendships was with Miss Frances R. Morse of Boston. The "exquisite Mary" referred to near the end is her sister, later Mrs. John W. Elliot.

*To Miss Frances R. Morse.*

[Dictated to Mrs. James]

CAMBRIDGE, Dec. 26, 1878.

Our DEAR FANNY,— I (W.) shield myself under my wife's handwriting to drop that formal style of address which has so long cast its cold shadow over our intercourse, and for which, now that I have become an old foggy whilst you still remain a blooming child, there seems no further good reason. Are you willing that henceforward we should call each other by our first names? If so, respond in kind. I

have got into the habit of dictating to *her* all that I write, in order to save my eyes. This letter is from both of us.

Your letter from Brighton of Oct. 15th was duly and gladly received. You have since then seen a great many things, and we have heard of you occasionally, latest of your ascent of the Nile with the Longfellows. They will be pleasant companions and I hope the long rest, delicious climate and beautiful outlook of that voyage will do — a world of good. It is too pitiful to think of her breaking down just at a time when one's active faculties have so much incitement to exert themselves. I am glad your mother is so much better. And how you will enjoy the sights of the winter! Don't you wish you had taken history instead of English literature!

We are very happily "boarding" on the corner of Harvard and Ware Street, next door to old Mrs. Cary's, where the Tappans used to live. We have absolutely no housekeeping trouble; we live surrounded by our wedding presents, and can devote all our energies to studying our lessons, dining with our respective mothers-in-law, receiving and repaying our "calls," which average one a day, and anxiously keeping our accounts in a little book so as to see where the trouble is if both ends don't meet.

We meant to have sent you this letter on Christmas day, but it was crowded out by many interruptions. We had, considering the age of the world and the hard times, quite a show of Xmas gifts and mild festivities.

. . . I suppose you get your "Nation" regularly on the Nile, so I make no comments on public affairs. We all feel sorry for poor old England just now. It really seems as if with us things were settling down upon a solid and orderly basis of general frugality. Keen cold weather, bare ground, and clear sky, west wind filling the air with clouds of frozen

dust, and an engagement at the dentist's in an hour from this will seem to you on the Nile like tales told by an idiot. Still they are true for me. Pray write again and let us hear that you are all well, especially the exquisite Mary, to whom give lots of love, and with plenty to your parents and self, believe me, yours faithfully,

WM. JAMES.

The passage which follows is taken from a letter to Mrs. James, of about this time. It is so unusual a bit of self-analysis that it is included here. James himself never failed to recognize that every man's thought is biased by his temperament as well as guided by purely rational considerations.

*To Mrs. James.*

. . . I have often thought that the best way to define a man's character would be to seek out the particular mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says: "*This* is the real me!" And afterwards, considering the circumstances in which the man is placed, and noting how some of them are fitted to evoke this attitude, whilst others do not call for it, an outside observer may be able to prophesy where the man may fail, where succeed, where be happy and where miserable. Now as well as I can describe it, this characteristic attitude in me always involves an element of active tension, of holding my own, as it were, and trusting outward things to perform their part so as to make it a full harmony, but without any *guaranty* that they will. Make it a guaranty — and the attitude immediately becomes to my consciousness stagnant and stingless. Take



away the guaranty, and I feel (provided I am *überhaupt* in vigorous condition) a sort of deep enthusiastic bliss, of bitter willingness to do and suffer anything, which translates itself physically by a kind of stinging pain inside my breast-bone (don't smile at this — it is to me an essential element of the whole thing!), and which, although it is a mere mood or emotion to which I can give no form in words, authenticates itself to me as the deepest principle of all active and theoretic determination which I possess. . . .

W. J.

The next letter contains the first reference to work on the "Psychology." It also introduces into this volume the name and personality of a colleague-to-be with whom James's relations were destined to be close and permanent.

Josiah Royce was then a young man "from the intellectual barrens of California" whose brilliant work was still to be done, and whose philosophic genius had not yet been disclosed to the public, although it may fairly be said to have been announced by every line of his engagingly Socrates-like face and figure. He had been born and brought up among the most primitive surroundings in Grass Valley, California, and won his way to a brief period of study in Germany and to a degree at Johns Hopkins in 1878. While yet a student there, he paid a visit to Cambridge, and he has left his own quotable record of the meeting which resulted, and of what followed.

"My real acquaintance with [James] began one summer-day in 1877, when I first visited him in [his father's] house on Quincy Street, and was permitted to pour out my soul to somebody who really seemed to believe that a young man might rightfully devote his life to philosophy if he chose. I was then a student at the Johns Hopkins University. The

opportunities for a life-work in philosophy in this country were few. Most of my friends and advisers had long been telling me to let the subject alone. Perhaps, so far as I was concerned, their advice was sound; but in any case I was, so far, incapable of accepting that advice. Yet if somebody had not been ready to tell me that I had a right to work for truth in my own way, I should ere long have been quite discouraged. I do not know what I then could have done. James found me at once — made out what my essential interests were at our first interview, accepted me with all my imperfections, as one of those many souls who ought to be able to find themselves in their own way, gave a patient and willing ear to just my variety of philosophical experience, and used his influence from that time on, not to win me as a follower, but to give me my chance. It was upon his responsibility that I was later led to get my first opportunities here at Harvard.”<sup>1</sup>

The opportunities did not ripen until 1882–83, however; and in the meanwhile Royce returned to the young University of California as an instructor in logic and rhetoric. Letters written to him there will show how cordially James continued to sympathize with the aspirations of his young friend, and how eagerly he fostered the possibility of an appointment to the Harvard philosophical department. When the opportunity arose, James seized it. Thereafter he and Royce saw each other so constantly in Cambridge that there were not many occasions for either to write letters to the other. Instead, allusions to Royce appear frequently in the letters to other people.

The philosophical club which is alluded to at the end of the letter was presided over by Dr. W. T. Harris and held informal meetings in Boston during this one winter.

<sup>1</sup> *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, vol. xviii, p. 631 (June, 1910).

Its purpose was to read and discuss Hegel. Dr. C. C. Everett, Prof. G. H. Palmer, and Thomas Davidson were among the members.

*To Josiah Royce.*

CAMBRIDGE, *Feb.* 16 [1879].

MY DEAR ROYCE,—Your letter was most welcome. I had often found myself wondering how you were getting on, and your wail as the solitary philosopher between Behrings' Strait and Tierra del Fuego has a grand, lonesome picturesqueness about it. I am sorry your surroundings are not more mentally congenial. But recollect your extreme youth and the fact that you are making a living and practising yourself in the pedagogic art, *überhaupt*. You might be forced to do something much farther away from your chosen line, and even then not make a living. I think you are a lucky youth even as matters stand. Unexpected chances are always turning up. A fortnight ago President Eliot was asked to recommend some one for a \$5000 professorship of philosophy in the New York City College. One Griffin of Amherst was finally appointed. I imagine that Gilman [of Johns Hopkins] is keeping his eye on you and only waiting for the disgrace of youth to fade from your person.

I liked your article on Schiller very much, and hope you will send more to Harris. That most villainous of editors, as I am told, has himself been to Baltimore lately as an office-seeker. But the rumor may be false. In some respects he might be a useful man for the Johns Hopkins University, but I would give no more for his judgment than for that of a Digger Indian. I hope you will write something about Hodgson. He is quite as worthy as Kant of supporting any number of parasites and partial assimilators of his

substance. My sentence, I perceive, has a rather uncomplimentary sound. I meant only to say that you should not be deterred from treating him in your own way from fear of inadequacy. All his commentators must undoubtedly be inadequate for some time to come; but they will all help each other out. He seems to me the wealthiest mine of thought I ever met with.

With me, save for my eyes, things are jogging along smoothly. I am writing (very slowly) what may become a text-book of psychology. A proposal from Gilman to teach in Baltimore three months yearly for the next three years had to be declined as incompatible with work here. I will send you a corrected copy of Harris's journal with my article on Space, which was printed without my seeing the proof.

I suppose you subscribe to "Mind." The only decent thing I have ever written will, I hope, appear in the July number of that sheet.<sup>1</sup> The delays of publication are fearful. Most of this was written in 1877. If it ever sees the light, I hope you will let me know what you think of it, and how it tallies with your own theory of the Concept, which latter I would fain swallow and digest. I wish you belonged to our philosophic club here. It is very helpful to the uprooting of weeds from one's own mind as well as the detection of beams in one's neighbor's eyes. Write often and believe me faithfully yours,

WM. JAMES.

<sup>1</sup> "The only decent thing I have ever written" appeared in *Mind* under the title "The Sentiment of Rationality." A footnote (p. 346) ran as follows: "This article is the first chapter of a psychological work on the motives which lead men to philosophize. It deals with the purely theoretic or logical impulse. Other chapters treat of practical and emotional motives, and in the conclusion an attempt is made to use the motives as tests of the soundness of different philosophies."

To Josiah Royce.

CAMBRIDGE, Feb. 3, 1880.

BELoved ROYCE!— So far was I from having forgotten you that I had been revolving in my mind, on the very day when your letter came, the rhetorical formulas of objurgation with which I was to begin a page of inquiries of you: whether you were dead and buried or had become an idiot or were sick or blind or what, that you sent no word of yourself. I am blind as ever, which may excuse my silence.

First of all *Glückwünsche* as to your *Verlobung*! which, like the true philosopher that you are, you mention parenthetically and without names, dates, numbers of dollars, etc., etc. I think it shows great sense in her, and no small amount of it in you, whoever she be. I have found in marriage a calm and repose I never knew before, and only wish I had done the thing ten years earlier. I think the lateness of our usual marriages is a bad thing, and hope your engagement will not last very long.

It is refreshing to hear your account of philosophic work. . . . I'm sorry you've given up your article on Hodgson. He *is* obscure enough, and makes me sometimes wonder whether the *ignotum* does not pass itself off for the *magnifico* in his pages. I enclose his photograph as a loan, trusting you will return it soon. I will never write again for Harris's journal. He refused an article of mine a year ago "for lack of room," and has postponed the printing of two admirable original articles by T. Davidson and Elliot Cabot for the last ten months or more, in order to accommodate Mrs. Channing's verses and Miss —'s drivel about the school of Athens, etc., etc. It is too loathsome. Harris has resigned his school position in St. Louis and will, I am told, come East to live. I know not whether he means to lay siege to the Johns Hopkins professorship.

My ignorant prejudice against all Hegelians, except Hegel himself, grows wusser and wusser. Their sacerdotal airs! and their sterility! Contemplating their navels and the syllable *oum*! My dear friend Palmer, assistant professor of philosophy here, is already one of the white-winged band, having been made captive by Caird in two summers of vacation in Scotland. . . . The ineffectiveness and impotence of the ending of [Caird's] work on Kant seem to me simply scandalous, after its pretentious (and able) beginning. What do you think of Carveth [Reid]'s Essay on Shadworth [Hodgson]? I have n't read it. Our Philosophic Club here is given up this year — I think we're all rather sick of each other's voices. My teaching is small in numbers, though my men are good. I've tried Renouvier as a text-book — for the last time! His exposition offers too many difficulties. I enjoyed your Rhapsody on Space, and hereby pledge myself to buy two copies of your work ten years hence, and to devote the rest of my life to the propagation of its doctrines. I despise my own article,<sup>1</sup> which was dashed off for a momentary purpose and published for another. But I don't see why its main doctrine, from a psychologic and sublunary point of view, is not sound; and I think I can, if my psychology ever gets writ, set it down in decently clear and orderly form. All *deducers* of space are, I am sure, mythologists. You are, after all, not so very much isolated in California. We are all isolated — "columns left alone of a temple once complete," etc. Books are our companions more than men. But I wish nevertheless, and firmly expect, that somehow or other you will get a call East, and within my humble sphere of power I will do what I can to further that end. My accursed eye-sight balks me always about study and pro-

<sup>1</sup> "The Spatial Quale," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 1879, vol. XIII, p. 64.

duction. *Ora pro me!* With most respectful and devout regards to the fair Object, believe me always your

WM. JAMES.

*To Charles Renouvier.*

CAMBRIDGE, June 1, 1880.

MY DEAR MONSIEUR RENOUVIER,— My last lesson in the course on your “Essais” took place today. The final examination occurs this week. The students have been profoundly interested, though their reactions on your teaching seem as diverse as their personalities; one (the maturest of all) being yours body and soul, another turning out a strongly materialistic fatalist! and the rest occupying positions of mixed doubt and assent; all however (but one) being convinced by your treatment of freedom and certitude.

As for myself, I must frankly confess to you that I am more unsettled than I have been for years. I have read several times over your reply to Lotze, and your reply to my letter. The latter was fully discussed in the class. The former seems to me a perfectly masterly expression of a certain intellectual position, and with the latter, I think it makes it perfectly clear to me where our divergence lies. I can formulate all your reasonings for myself, but — dare I say it? — they fail to awaken conviction. It seems as if, the simpler the point, the more hopeless the disagreement in philosophy. But I will enter into no further discussion now. I think it will be profitable for me, for some time to come, inwardly to digest the matters in question and your utterances before trying to articulate any more opinions.

I am overwhelmed with duties at present, and shall very shortly sail for England to pass part of the vacation; maybe I shall get to the Continent and see you. If we meet, I hope you will treat my heresies on the question of the

Infinite with the indulgence and magnanimity which your doctrine of freedom in theoretic affirmations exacts!! I will send you in a day or two an essay which develops your psychology of the voluntary process, and which I hope will give you pleasure.

Pray excuse the haste and superficiality of this note, which is only meant to explain why I do not write at greater length and to announce my hope of soon grasping you by the hand and assuring you in person of my devotion and indebtedness. Always yours,

WM. JAMES.

James sailed in June a good deal fagged by his year's work, and got back by the first week of September, having spent most of the interval seeking solitude and refreshment in the Alps and Northern Italy. On his way home he paid his respects to Renouvier at Avignon, but otherwise made no effort to meet his European colleagues.

*To Charles Renouvier.*

CAMBRIDGE, Dec. 27, 1880.

MY DEAR MONSIEUR RENOUVIER,—Your note and the conclusion of my article in the "Critique" came together this morning. It gives me almost a feeling of pain that you, at your age and with your achievements, should be spending your time in translating my feeble words, when by every principle of right I should be engaged in turning your invaluable writings into English. The state of my eyes is, as you know, my excuse for this as for all other shortcomings. I have not even read the whole of your translation of [my] "Feeling of Effort," though the passages I have perused have seemed to me excellently well done. My exposition strikes me as rather complicated now. It was written in great haste and,



were I to rewrite it, it should be simpler. The omissions of which you speak are of no importance whatever.

I have read your discussion with Lotze in the "Revue Philosophique" and agree with Hodgson that you carry off there the honors of the battle. *Quant au fond de la question*, however, I am still in doubt and wait for the light of further reflexion to settle my opinion. The matter in my mind complicates itself with the question of a universal ego. If time and space are not *in se*, do we not need an enveloping ego to make continuous the times and spaces, not necessarily coincident, of the partial egos? On this question, as I told you, I will not fail to write again when I get new light, which I trust may decide me in your favor.

My principal amusement this winter has been resisting the inroads of Hegelism in our University. My colleague Palmer, a recent convert and a man of much ability, has been making an active propaganda among the more advanced students. It is a strange thing, this resurrection of Hegel in England and here, after his burial in Germany. I think his philosophy will probably have an important influence on the development of our liberal form of Christianity. It gives a quasi-metaphysic backbone which this theology has always been in need of, but it is too fundamentally rotten and charlatanish to last long. As a reaction against materialistic evolutionism it has its use, only this evolutionism is fertile while Hegelism is absolutely sterile.

I think often of the too-short hours I spent with you and Monsieur Pillon and wish they might return. Believe me with the warmest thanks and regards, yours faithfully,

WM. JAMES.

In August of 1882 James arranged with the College for a year's leave of absence, and sailed for Europe again, this

time with the double purpose of giving himself a vacation and of meeting some of the European investigators who were working on the problems in which he had become absorbed.

He landed in England, and paused there just long enough to throw his brother Henry into the state of half-resentful bewilderment that invariably resulted from their first European reunions. Henry, to whom Europe, and England in particular, had already become an absorbing passion and for whom American reactions upon Europe were still an unexhausted theme, greeted every arriving American with eager curiosity and a confident expectation that the stranger would "register" impressions of the most charming enchantment and pleasure for his edification. William, on the other hand, was always most under the European spell when in America; and — whether moved by the constitutional restlessness that seized him so soon as ever he began to travel, or by the perversity that was a fascinating trait in his character and was usually provoked by his younger brother's admiring neighborhood — he was always most ardently American when on European soil. Thus his first words of greeting to Henry on stepping out of the steamer-train were: "My! — how cramped and inferior England seems! After all, it's poor old Europe, just as it used to be in our dreary boyhood! America may be raw and shrill, but I could never live with this as you do! I'm going to hurry down to Switzerland [or wherever] and then home again as soon as may be. It was a mistake to come over! I thought it would do me good. Hereafter I'll stay at home. You'll have to come to America if you want to see the family."

The effect on Henry can better be imagined than described. Time never accustomed him to these collisions,

even though he learned to expect them. England inferior! A mistake to come abroad! Horror and consternation are weak terms by which to describe his feelings; and nothing but a devotion seldom existing between brothers, and a lively interest in the astonishing phenomenon of such a reaction, ever carried him through the hour. He usually ended by hurrying William onward — anywhere — within the day if possible — and remained alone to ejaculate, to exclaim and to expatiate for weeks on the rude and exciting cyclone that had burst upon him and passed by.

On this occasion it took only two days for William to start on from London for the Rhine, Nuremberg, and Vienna; then to Venice, where he idled for the first half of October. After this short pause he returned to Prague; and then, working northward, consumed the autumn in visiting the universities of Dresden, Berlin, Leipzig, Liège and Paris. Intimate letters to his wife, who had remained in Cambridge with their two little boys, are almost the only ones that survive. A few passages from these will therefore be included.

*To Mrs. James.*

VIENNA, *Sept.* 24, 1882.

... I wish you could have been with me yesterday to see some French pictures at the "Internationale Kunst Ausstellung"; they gave an idea of the vigor of France in that way just now. One, a peasant woman, in all her brutish loutishness sitting staring before her at noonday on the grass she's been cutting, while the man lies flat on his back with straw hat over face. She with such a look of infinite unawakenedness, such childlike virginity under her shapeless body and in her face, as to make it a poem.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bastien-Lepage's *Les Foins* (The Hay-Makers).

Dear, perhaps the deepest impression I've got since I've been in Germany is that made on me by the indefatigable beavers of old wrinkled peasant women, striding like men through the streets, dragging their carts or lugging their baskets, minding their business, seeming to notice nothing, in the stream of luxury and vice, but belonging far away, to something better and purer. Their poor, old, ravaged and stiffened faces, their poor old bodies dried up with ceaseless toil, their patient souls make me weep. "They are our conscripts." They are the venerable ones whom we should reverence. All the mystery of womanhood seems incarnated in their ugly being — the Mothers! the Mothers! Ye are all one! Yes, Alice dear, what I love in you is only what these blessed old creatures have; and I'm glad and proud, when I think of my own dear Mother with tears running down my face, to know that she is one with these.<sup>1</sup> Good-night, good-night! . . .

*To Mrs. James.*

AUSSIG, BOHEMIA, Nov. 2, 1882.

. . . As for Prague, *veni, vidi, vici*. I went there with much trepidation to do my social-scientific duty. The mighty Hering in especial intimidated me beforehand; but having taken the plunge, the cutaneous glow and "euphoria" (*vide* dictionary) succeeded, and I have rarely enjoyed a forty-eight hours better, in spite of the fact that the good and sharp-nosed Stumpf (whose book "Über die Raumvorstellungen" I verily believe thou art capable of never having noticed the cover of!) insisted on trotting me about, day and night, over the whole length and breadth of Prague, and that [Ernst] Mach (Professor of Physics), genius of all trades, simply took Stumpf's place to do the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Introduction, p. 9 *supra*.

same. I heard [Ewald] Hering give a very poor physiology lecture and Mach a beautiful physical one. I presented them with my visiting card, saying that I was with their "Schriften sehr vertraut und wollte nicht eher Prague verlassen als bis ich wenigstens ein Paar Worte mit ihnen umtauschte," etc.<sup>1</sup> They received me with open arms. I had an hour and a half's talk with Hering, which cleared up some things for me. He asked me to come to his house that evening, but I gave an evasive reply, being fearful of boring him. Meanwhile Mach came to my hotel and I spent four hours walking and supping with him at his club, an unforgettable conversation. I don't think anyone ever gave me so strong an impression of pure intellectual genius. He apparently has read everything and thought about everything, and has an absolute simplicity of manner and winningness of smile when his face lights up, that are charming.

With Stumpf I spent five hours on Monday evening (this is Thursday), three on Wednesday morning and four in the afternoon; so I feel rather intimate. A clear-headed and just-minded, though pale and anxious-looking man in poor health. He had another philosopher named Marty [?] to dine with me yesterday — jolly young fellow. My native *Geschwätzigkeit*<sup>2</sup> triumphed over even the difficulties of the German tongue; I careered over the field, taking the pitfalls and breastworks at full run, and was fairly astounded myself at coming in alive. I learned a good many things from them, both in the way of theory and fact, and shall probably keep up a correspondence with Stumpf. They are not so different from us as we think. Their greater thoroughness is largely the result of circumstances. I found

<sup>1</sup> That I was intimate with their writings and did not wish to leave Prague without exchanging a few words with them.

<sup>2</sup> Loquacity.

that I had a more *cosmopolitan* knowledge of modern philosophic literature than any of them, and shall on the whole feel much less intimidated by the thought of their like than hitherto.

My letters will hereafter, I feel sure, have a more jocund tone. Damn Italy! It is n't a good thing to stay with one's inferiors. With the nourishing breath of the German air, and the sort of smoky and leathery German smell, vigor and good spirits have set in. I have walked well and slept well and eaten well and read well, and in short begin to feel as I expected I should when I decided upon this arduous pilgrimage. Prague is a —— city — the adjective is hard to find; not magnificent, but everything is too honest and homely,— we have in fact no English word for the peculiar quality that good German things have, of depth, solidity, picturesqueness, magnitude and homely goodness combined. They have worked out a really great civilization. “Dienst ist Dienst”!<sup>1</sup> said the gateman of a certain garden yesterday afternoon whom Stumpf was trying to persuade to let me in, as an American, to see the view five minutes after the closing hour had struck. *Dienst ist Dienst*. That is really the German motto everywhere — and I should like to know what American would ever think of justifying himself by just that formula. I say German of Prague, for it seems to me, in spite of the feverish nationalism of the natives, to be outwardly a pure German city. . . .

BERLIN, Nov. 9, 1882.

. . . Yesterday I went to the veterinary school to see H. Munk, the great brain vivisector. He was very cordial and poured out a torrent of talk for one and a half hours,

<sup>1</sup> Service is service.

though he could show me no animals. He gave me one of his new publications and introduced me to Dr. Baginsky (Professor Samuel Porter's favorite authority on the semi-circular canals, whose work I treated superciliously in my article). So we opened on the semicircular canals, and Baginsky's torrent of words was even more overwhelming than Munk's. I never felt quite so helpless and small-boyish before, and am to this hour dizzy from the onslaught. In the evening at the house of Gizycki (a Docent on Ethics), to a "privatissimum" with a supper after it. Good, square, deep-chested talk again, which I could n't help contrasting with the whining tones of our students and of some of the members of the Hegel Club — I hate to leave the wholesome, tonic atmosphere, the land where one talks best when he talks manliest — slowest, distinctest, with most deliberate emphasis and strong voice. . . .

LEIPZIG, *Nov.* 11, 1882.

. . . Jones spoilt my incipient nap this afternoon and I adjourned to his room to meet Smith and Brown<sup>\*</sup> again, with another American wild-cat reformer. Jones is too many for me — I'm glad I'm to get far off. Religion is well, moral regeneration is well, so is improvement of society, so are the courage, disinterestedness, ideality of all sorts, these men show in their lives; but I verily believe that the condition of being a man of the world, a gentleman, etc., carries something with it, an atmosphere, an outlook, a play, that all these things together fail to carry, and that is worth them all. I got so suffocated with their everlasting spiritual gossip! The falsest views and tastes somehow in a man of fashion are truer than the truest in a plebeian cad. And when I told the new man there that a "materialist"

<sup>\*</sup> The true names of three compatriots, who may be living, are not given.

would have no difficulty in keeping his place in Harvard College provided he was well-bred, I said what was really the highest test of the College excellence. I suppose he thought it sounded cynical. *Their* sphere is with the masses struggling into light, not with us at Harvard; though I'm glad I can meet them cordially for a while now and then. Thou see'st I have some "spleen" on me today. . . .

LEIPZIG, Nov. 13, 1882.

. . . Yesterday was a splendid day within and without. . . . The old town delightful in its blackness and plainness. I heard several lecturers. Old Ludwig's lecture in the afternoon was memorable for the extraordinary impression of character he made on me. The traditional German professor in its highest sense. A rusty brown wig and broad-skirted brown coat, a voluminous black neckcloth, an absolute unexcitability of manner, a clean-shaven face so plebeian and at the same time so grandly carved, with its hooked nose and gentle kindly mouth and inexhaustible patience of expression, that I never saw the like. Then to Wundt, who has a more refined elocution than any one I've yet heard in Germany. He received me very kindly after the lecture in his laboratory, dimly trying to remember my writings, and I stay over today, against my intention, to go to his *psychologische Gesellschaft* tonight. Have been writing psychology most all day. . . .

In train for LIÈGE, Nov. 18, 1882.

. . . I believe I did n't tell you, in the bustle of traveling, much about Wundt. He made a very pleasant and personal impression on me, with his agreeable voice and ready, tooth-showing smile. His lecture also was very able, and my opinion of him is higher than before seeing him. But



he seemed very busy and showed no desire to see more of me than the present interview either time. The *psychologische Gesellschaft* I stayed over to see was postponed, but he did not propose to me to do anything else — to the gain of my ease, but to the loss of my vanity. Dear old Stumpf has been the friendliest of these fellows. With him I shall correspond. . . .

LIÈGE, Nov. 20, 1882.

. . . I am still at Delbœuf's, aching in every joint and muscle, weary in every nerve-cell, but unable to get away till tomorrow noon. I was to have started today. . . . The total lesson of what I have done in the past month is to make me quieter with my home-lot and readier to believe that it is one of the chosen places of the Earth. Certainly the instruction and facilities at our university are on the whole superior to anything I have seen; the rawnesses we mention with such affliction at home belong rather to the century than to us (witness the houses here); we are not a whit more isolated than they are here. In all Belgium there seem to be but two genuine philosophers; in Berlin they have little to do with each other, and I really believe that in my way I have a wider view of the field than anyone I've seen (I count out, of course, my ignorance of ancient authors). We are a sound country and my opinion of our essential worth has risen and not fallen. We only lack abdominal depth of temperament and the power to sit for an hour over a single pot of beer without being able to tell at the end of it what we've been thinking about. Also to reform our altogether abominable, infamous and infra-human voices and way of talking. (What *further* fatal defects hang together with that I don't know — it seems as if it must carry something very bad with it.) The first thing

to do is to establish in Cambridge a genuine German plebeian Kneipe club, to which all instructors and picked students shall be admitted. If that succeeds, we shall be perfect, especially if we talk therein with deeper voices. . . .

*To Henry James.*

PARIS, Nov. 22, 1882.

DEAR H.,— Found at Hottinguer's this A.M. your letter with all the enclosures — and a wail you had sent to Berlin. Also six letters from my wife and seven or eight others, not counting papers and magazines. I will mail back yours and father's letter to me. Alice [Mrs. W. J.] speaks of father's indubitable improvement in strength, but our sister Alice apparently is somewhat run down.— Paris looks delicious — I shall try to get settled as soon as possible and meanwhile feel as if the confusion of life was recommencing. I saw in Germany all the men I cared to see and talked with most of them. With three or four I had a really nutritious time. The trip has amply paid for itself. I found third-class *Nichtraucher* almost always empty and perfectly comfortable. The great use of such experiences is less the definite information you gain from anyone, than a sort of solidification of your own foothold on life. Nowhere did I see a university which seems to do for *all* its students anything like what Harvard does. Our methods throughout are better. It is only in the select "Seminaria" (private classes) that a few German students making researches with the professor gain something from him personally which his genius alone can give. I certainly got a most distinct impression of my own *information* in regard to *modern* philosophic matters being broader than that of any one I met, and our Harvard post of observation being more cosmopolitan. Delbœuf in Liège was an angel and much the

best teacher I've seen.<sup>1</sup> . . . "The Century," with your very good portrait, etc., was at Hottinguer's this A.M., sent by my wife. I shall read it presently. I'm off now to see if I can get your leather trunk, sent from London, arrested by inundations, and ordered to be returned to Paris. I never needed its contents a second. And in your little American valise and my flabby black hand-bag and shawl-straps and a small satchel, I carried not only everything I used, but collected a whole library of books in Leipsig, some pieces of Venetian glass in their balky bolsters of seaweed, a quart bottle of eau de Cologne, and a lot of other acquisitions. I feel remarkably tough now, and fairly ravenous for my psychologic work. Address Hottinguer's.

W. J.

James's mother had died during the preceding winter. Now, just after his arrival in Paris, he received news that his father was dangerously ill.

He went to London immediately, with the intention of getting home as soon as possible. On arriving at his brother Henry's lodgings, he found that Henry had already sailed. He also received a despatch advising him that the danger was not immediate and that he should wait. He remained, but with misgivings which the next news intensified.

*To his Father.*

BOLTON ST., LONDON, Dec. 14, 1882.

DARLING OLD FATHER,—Two letters, one from my Alice last night, and one from Aunt Kate to Harry just now, have

<sup>1</sup> "My tour in Germany was pleasant, and from the pedagogic point of view instructive; although its chief result was to make me more satisfied than ever with our Harvard College methods of teaching, and to make me feel that in America we have perhaps a more cosmopolitan post of observation than is elsewhere to be found." To Renouvier, Dec. 18, 1882.

somewhat dispelled the mystery in which the telegrams left your condition; and although their news is several days earlier than the telegrams, I am free to suppose that the latter report only an aggravation of the symptoms the letters describe. It is far more agreeable to think of this than of some dreadful unknown and sudden malady.

We have been so long accustomed to the hypothesis of your being taken away from us, especially during the past ten months, that the thought that this may be your last illness conveys no very sudden shock. You are old enough, you've given your message to the world in many ways and will not be forgotten; you are here left alone, and on the other side, let us hope and pray, dear, dear old Mother is waiting for you to join her. If you go, it will not be an in-harmonious thing. Only, if you are still in possession of your normal consciousness, I should like to see you once again before we part. I stayed here only in obedience to the last telegram, and am waiting now for Harry — who knows the exact state of my mind, and who will know yours — to telegraph again what I shall do. Meanwhile, my blessed old Father, I scribble this line (which may reach you though I should come too late), just to tell you how full of the tenderest memories and feelings about you my heart has for the last few days been filled. In that mysterious gulf of the past into which the present soon will fall and go back and back, yours is still for me the central figure. All my intellectual life I derive from you; and though we have often seemed at odds in the expression thereof, I'm sure there's a harmony somewhere, and that our strivings will combine. What my debt to you is goes beyond all my power of estimating,— so early, so penetrating and so constant has been the influence. You need be in no anxiety about your literary remains. I will see them well

taken care of, and that your words shall not suffer for being concealed. At Paris I heard that Milsand, whose name you may remember in the "Revue des Deux Mondes" and elsewhere, was an admirer of the "Secret of Swedenborg," and Hodgson told me your last book had deeply impressed him. So will it be; especially, I think, if a collection of *extracts* from your various writings were published, after the manner of the extracts from Carlyle, Ruskin, & Co. I have long thought such a volume would be the best monument to you.—As for us; we shall live on each in his way, — feeling somewhat unprotected, old as we are, for the absence of the parental bosoms as a refuge, but holding fast together in that common sacred memory. We will stand by each other and by Alice, try to transmit the torch in our offspring as you did in us, and when the time comes for being gathered in, I pray we may, if not all, some at least, be as ripe as you. As for myself, I know what trouble I've given you at various times through my peculiarities; and as my own boys grow up, I shall learn more and more of the kind of trial you had to overcome in superintending the development of a creature different from yourself, for whom you felt responsible. I say this merely to show how my *sympathy* with you is likely to grow much livelier, rather than to fade — and not for the sake of regrets.—As for the other side, and Mother, and our all possibly meeting, I *can't* say anything. More than ever at this moment do I feel that if that *were* true, all would be solved and justified. And it comes strangely over me in bidding you good-bye how a life is but a day and expresses mainly but a single note. It is so much like the act of bidding an ordinary good-night. Good-night, my sacred old Father! If I don't see you again — Farewell! a blessed farewell! Your

WILLIAM.

The elder Henry James died on the nineteenth of December. A cablegram was sent to London; and on learning of his father's death, James wrote a letter to his wife from which the following extract is taken.

*To Mrs. James.*

. . . Father's boyhood up in Albany, Grandmother's house, the father and brothers and sister, with their passions and turbulent histories, his burning, amputation and sickness, his college days and ramblings, his theological throes, his engagement and marriage and fatherhood, his finding more and more of the truths he finally settled down in, his travels in Europe, the days of the old house in New York and all the men I used to see there, at last his quieter motion down the later years of life in Newport, Boston and Cambridge, with his friends and correspondents about him, and his books more and more easily brought forth — how long, how long all these things were in the living, but how short their memory now is! What remains is a few printed pages, us and our children and some incalculable modifications of other people's lives, influenced this day or that by what he said or did. For me, the humor, the good spirits, the humanity, the faith in the divine, and the sense of his right to have a say about the deepest reasons of the universe, are what will stay by me. I wish I could believe I should transmit some of them to our babes. We all of us have some of his virtues and some of his shortcomings. Unlike the cool, dry thin-edged men who now abound, he was full of the fumes of the *ur-sprünglich* human nature; things turbid, more than he could formulate, wrought within him and made his judgments of rejection of so much of what was brought [before him] seem like revelations as

well as knock-down blows. . . . I hope that rich soil of human nature will not become more rare! . . .

Two months later James said in a letter to Mrs. Gibbens: "It is singular how I'm learning every day now how the thought of his comment on my experiences has hitherto formed an integral part of my daily consciousness, without my having realized it at all. I interrupt myself incessantly now in the old habit of imagining what he will say when I tell him this or that thing I have seen or heard."

James remained in London until mid-February of 1883, and took advantage of the opportunity to see more of certain men there—among them Shadworth Hodgson, Edmund Gurney, Croom Robertson, Frederick Pollock, Leslie Stephen, Carveth Reid, and Francis Galton. His eyes were troubling him again, but he did some writing on psychology. After paying another short visit to Paris, he sailed for home in March.

## IX

1883-1890

*Writing the "Principles of Psychology"—Psychical Research—The Place at Chocorua — The Irving Street House—The Paris Psychological Congress of 1889*

JAMES had now found his feet, professionally, as well as in other ways. He strode ahead on the next stage of his journey with a firmness of which he would have been incapable in the seventies, and carried a heavy burden of work forward, with never a long halt and without ever setting it down, until he had finished the two large volumes of the "Principles of Psychology" in 1890. The previous decade had counted steadily for inward clarification, for health and for confidence. He was no longer harassed by serious illnesses and pursued by the spectre of possible invalidism. Marriage, parenthood — these immense events in a man's spiritual journey — had happened for him within the last four years and had brought him new loves and ambitions. He was no longer perplexed by misgivings about his aims and abilities, but had arrived at the conception of his treatise on psychology and had begun to formulate its chapters. He had become a very successful teacher, and might fairly have suspected himself of being an inspiring one. His work was beginning to be well known outside the halls of his own University.

It is not the purpose of this book to trace the origin of his ideas or their influence on contemporary discussion. But any reader who will glance at Professor Perry's annotated



"List" of his published work may see that he had written important papers by 1883, and that most of what was original in his psychology must by then have been present to his mind. During the visit he had just made to Europe, he had got a personal impression of the transatlantic colleagues whose writings had interested him especially, and had spent many hours in the company of certain among them with whom he found himself to be particularly in sympathy. Thus he had gained a bracing sense of comradeship with the men who were collaborating in his field. Last of all, he had brought home with him a happy conviction that the most propitious place for him to teach and write his book in was the philosophical department of his own University.

So far as the "textbook on Psychology" was concerned, however, he still underestimated the amount of original investigation and thought which his instinct for "concrete" reality was to exact of him. Perhaps also he made too little allowance for the inadequacies of current laboratory methods and of the existing literature of the subject. Helmholtz and Wundt had already published important reports from their laboratories in Germany; but psychology was still generally considered to be an inductive science, which achieved its purposes by introspection and description, and which had no very broad connection with physiology nor many laboratory methods of its own. James had still to help make a modern science of it by his own immense effort. He may perhaps be said to have set to work when he offered the course on "The Relation between Physiology and Psychology" to graduate students in 1875, and made the class take part in experiments which he arranged in a room in the Lawrence Scientific School building.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 179 *supra*, and note.

Thus with teaching, experimenting, and occasionally writing out his conclusions as he went along, he ploughed his way through his subject. The triple process is familiar enough today to most men of science. But James and the majority of his contemporaries had been trained differently or not at all; and their generation, following a few great leaders like Pasteur, Darwin and Helmholtz, had to establish new standards of criticism and new methods of inquiry in every department of science. When the "Psychology" was drawing to its completion, James wrote two sentences about his difficulties to his brother Henry. They might equally well have been written at any other time during the eighties. "I have," he said, "to forge every sentence in the teeth of irreducible and stubborn facts. It is like walking through the densest brush-wood."

There was one peculiarly stubborn and irreducible class of facts which he took up and gave much thought to during this period.

As early as 1869 he had recognized the desirability of examining the class of phenomena that are popularly called psychic<sup>1</sup> in a critical and modern spirit. This was not because he was in the least impressed by the lucubrations of the kind of mind which can be well described, in Macaulay's phrase, as "utterly wanting in the faculty by which a demonstrated truth is distinguished from a plausible supposition." But an instinctive "love of sportsmanlike fair play" was stirred in him by the indifference with which men

<sup>1</sup> See an unsigned review of Epes Sargent's "Planchette," in the Boston *Advertiser* of March 10, 1869. "The present attitude of society on this whole question is as extraordinary and anomalous as it is discreditable to the pretension of an age which prides itself on enlightenment and the diffusion of knowledge. . . . The phenomena seem, in their present state, to pertain more to the sphere of the disinterested student of nature than to that of the ordinary layman." The review was reprinted in *Collected Essays and Reviews*.

who professed to be students of nature,<sup>1</sup> and particularly scientists whose prime concern was with our mental life, usually declined to examine phenomena which have occurred in every known human race and generation. He was in cordial sympathy with the announced intention of the Society for Psychical Research to investigate the abnormal and "supernormal" occurrences. He referred aptly to such occurrences as "wild facts," having as yet no scientific "stall or pigeon-hole."<sup>2</sup> Above all, he was conscious, from the beginning, of the proximity and possible relevance to his psychological and philosophical problems of this large body of unanalyzed material.

Most people cannot approach such matters without emotional bias. The atmosphere in which the public discussion of them goes on is still poisoned by superstition and clouded by prejudice. No scientific man involves himself in such inquiries, even now, without the certitude that his

<sup>1</sup> As an example of this James once quoted Huxley: "I take no interest in the subject. The only case of 'Spiritualism' I have had the opportunity of examining into for myself was as gross an imposture as ever came under my notice. But supposing the phenomena to be genuine — they do not interest me. If anybody would endow me with the faculty of listening to the chatter of old women and curates in the nearest cathedral town, I should decline the privilege, having better things to do. And if the folk in the spiritual world do not talk more wisely and sensibly than their friends report them to do, I put them in the same category. The only good that I can see in the demonstration of the truth of 'Spiritualism' is to furnish an additional argument against suicide. Better live a crossing-sweeper, than die and be made to talk twaddle by a 'medium' hired at a guinea a séance." *Life and Letters*, vol. 1, p. 452 (New York, 1900).

James's comment should be added: "Obviously the mind of the excellent Huxley has here but two whole-souled categories, namely, revelation or imposture, to apperceive the case by. Sentimental reasons bar revelation out, for the messages, he thinks, are not romantic enough for that; fraud exists anyhow; therefore the whole thing is nothing but imposture. The odd point is that so few of those who talk in this way realize that they and the spiritists are using the same major premise and differing only in the minor. The major premise is: 'Any spirit-revelation must be romantic.' The minor of the spiritist is: 'This *is* romantic'; that of the Huxleyan is: 'This is dingy twaddle' — whence their opposite conclusions!" (*Memories and Studies*, pp. 185, 186.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Will to Believe*, etc., p. 302.

statements will be misconstrued by some of his professional brethren, and that his name will be taken in vain by newspapers and charlatans. James recognized all this, but saw in it no excuse for avoiding the subject; rather, a reason for examining it in an unprejudiced spirit and for avowing his conclusions openly.

The English Society for Psychical Research had been founded in 1882. In 1884 James became a corresponding member and concerned himself actively in organizing an American society of the same name in Boston. He made contributions to the "Proceedings" of this society during the six years of its existence; and, when it amalgamated with the English Society in 1890, he became a Vice-President of the latter. With the exception of a term during which he served as its President (in 1894-95), he continued to be a Vice-President of the S. P. R. until his death, and occasionally published through its "Proceedings."

In the eighties he took up his share of the drudgery which was involved in investigating alleged cases of apparition, thought-transference, and mediumship. For one entire winter he and Professor G. H. Palmer attended "cabinet séances" every Saturday without discovering anything that they could report as other than fraudulent. But in the following year he got upon the track of the now famous Mrs. Piper, and he made his first report on her trance-state to the S. P. R. in 1886. After many tests and trials he was unable to "resist the conviction that knowledge appeared in her trances which she had never gained by the ordinary waking use of her eyes, ears and wits." Withholding his acceptance from the spirit-message hypothesis, he added: "What the source of this knowledge may be I know not, and have not a glimmer of an explanatory suggestion to make; but from admitting the fact of such knowledge I

can see no escape.”<sup>1</sup> He continued to find time for the investigation of other cases, and could sometimes console himself by laughing over expeditions which were quite fruitless of interesting result. A few sentences from letters addressed to Mrs. James in 1888, reporting an adventure with Richard Hodgson in New York, will serve as illustration:—

“[Apr. 6.] Hodgson and I started after our baggage arrived, to find Mr. B —, who, you may have seen by the papers, is making a scandal by having given himself over (hand and foot) to a medium, ‘Madam D —,’ who does most extraordinarily described physical performances. We found the old girl herself, a type for Alexandre Dumas, obese, wicked, jolly, intellectual, with no end of go and animal spirits, who entertained us for an hour, gave us an appointment for a sitting on Monday, and asked us to come and see Mr. B. tonight. What will come of it all I don’t know. It will be baffling, I suppose, like everything else of that kind.”

“[Apr. 7.] Mr. B. and Mrs. D. were ‘too tired’ to see us last night! I suspect that will be the case next Monday. It is the knowing thing to do under the circumstances. But that woman is one with whom one would fall *wildly* in love, if in love at all — she is such a fat, *fat* old villain. . . .”

“[Apr. 24th.] In bed at 11.30, after the most hideously inept psychical night, in Charleston, over a much-praised female medium who fraudulently played on the guitar. A plague take all white-livered, anæmic, flaccid, weak-voiced Yankee frauds! Give me a full blooded red-lipped villain like dear old D. — when shall I look upon her like again?”

In 1889 James undertook the labor of conducting the “Census of Hallucinations” in America. The census sought to discover, from lists of people selected at random,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Will to Believe*, etc., p. 319.

how many of them, when in good health and awake, had ever heard a voice, seen a form, or felt a touch which no material presence could account for. James received about seven thousand answers to the inquiries that were sent out in America; and after he had digested and reported them, the results turned out to be in remarkable conformity with the returns from other parts of the world. Some of James's own deductions from the returns will be found in the essay, "What Psychical Research has Accomplished."<sup>1</sup> Among other things, the census showed apparitions corresponding with a distant event as occurring more than four hundred times oftener than could be expected from a calculation of chances.

After this task had been completed, he usually avoided spending time in personal investigations.

*To Charles Renouvier.*

KEENE VALLEY, Aug. 5, 1883  
ADIRONDACKS.

MY DEAR MONSIEUR RENOUVIER,—My silence has been so protracted that I fear you must have wondered what its reasons could be. Only the old ones!—much to do, and little power to do it, obliging procrastination. You will doubtless have heard from the Pillons of my safe return home. I have spent the interval in the house of my mother-in-law in Cambridge, trying to do some work in the way of psychologic writing before the fatal day should arrive when

<sup>1</sup> It is not the province of this book to estimate the importance of the work done by James and the other men—Sidgwick, Myers, Gurney, Richard Hodgson, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Richet, to go no further—who supported and guided the S. P. R. It must be traced in the literature of automatisms, hypnosis, divided personality, and the "subliminal." In James's own writings the reader may be referred to the above named chapter of *The Will to Believe*, etc., two papers included in *Memories and Studies*, and a review of Myers's *Human Personality* in *Proc. of the (Eng.) S. P. R.*, vol. xviii, p. 22 (1903). See also p. 306 *infra*, and note.

the College bell, summoning *me* as well as my colleagues to the lecture-room, should make literary work almost impossible. Although my bodily condition, thanks to my winter abroad, has been better than in many years at a corresponding period, what I succeeded in accomplishing was well-nigh zero. I floundered round in the morasses of the theory of cognition,—the Object and the Ego,—tore up almost each day what I had written the day before, and although I am inwardly, of course, more aware than I was before of where the difficulties of the subject lie, outwardly I have hardly any manuscript to show for my pains. Your unparalleled literary fecundity is a perfect wonder to me. You should return pious thanks to the one or many gods who had a hand in your production, not only for endowing you with so clear a head, but for giving you so admirable a working temperament. The most rapid piece of literary work I ever did was completed ten days ago, and sent to “*Mind*,” where it will doubtless soon appear. I had promised to give three lectures at a rather absurd little “Summer School of Philosophy,” which has flourished for four or five years past in the little town of Concord near Boston, and which has an audience of from twenty to fifty persons, including the lecturers themselves; and, finding at the last moment that I could do nothing with my much meditated subject of the Object and the Ego, I turned round and lectured “On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology,”<sup>1</sup> and wrote the substance of the lectures out immediately after giving them—the whole occupying six days. I hope you may read the paper some time and approve it—though it is out of the current of your own favorite topics and consequently hardly a proper candidate for the honours of translation in the “*Critique*.”

<sup>1</sup> *Mind*, 1884, vol. ix, pp. 1–26.

I understand now why no really good classic manual of psychology exists; why all that do exist only treat of particular points and chapters with any thoroughness. It is impossible to write one at present, so infinitely more numerous are the difficulties of the task than the means of their solution. Every chapter bristles with obstructions that refer one to the next ten years of work for their mitigation.

With all this I have done very little consecutive reading. I have not yet got at your historic survey in the "Critique Religieuse," for which my brain nevertheless itches. But I have read your articles apropos of Fouillée, and found them — the latest one especially — admirable for clearness and completeness of statement. Surely nothing like them has ever been written — no such stripping of the question down to its naked essentials. Those who, like Fouillée, have the intuition of the Absolute Unity, will of course not profit by them or anything else. Why can all others view their own beliefs as *possibly* only hypotheses — *they* only not? Why does the Absolute Unity make its votaries so much more *conceited* at having attained it, than any other supposed truth does? This inner sense of superiority to all antagonists gives Fouillée his *fougue* and adds to his cleverness, and no doubt increases immensely the effectiveness of his writing over the average reader's mind. But it also makes him careless and liable to overshoot the mark.

I have just been interrupted by a visit from Noah Porter, D.D., President of Yale College, whose bulky work on "The Human Intellect" you may have in your library, possibly. An American college president is a very peculiar type of character, partly man of business, partly diplomatist, partly clergyman, and partly professor of metaphysics, armed with great authority and influence if his college is an important one — which Yale is; and Porter



is the paragon of the type — *bonhomme et rusé*, learned and simple, kindhearted and sociable, yet possessed of great decision and obstinacy. He is over seventy, but comes every summer here to the woods to refresh himself by long mountain walks and life in "camp," sleeping on a bed of green boughs before a great fire in the open air. He looks like a farmer or a fisherman, and there is no sort of human being who does not immediately feel himself entirely at home in his company.

I have been here myself just a week. The virgin forest comes close to our house, and the diversity of walks through it, the brooks and the ascensions of hilltops are infinite. I doubt if there be anything like it in Europe. Your mountains are grander, but you have nowhere this carpet of absolutely primitive forest, with its indescribably sweet exhalations, spreading in every direction unbroken. I shall stay here doing hardly any work till late in September. I need to lead a purely animal life for at least two months to carry me through the teaching year. My wife and two children are here, all well. I would send you her photograph and mine, save that hers — the only one I have — is too bad to send to anyone, and my own are for the moment exhausted. I find myself counting the years till my next visit to Europe becomes possible. Then it shall occur under more cheerful circumstances, if possible; and I shall stay the full fifteen months instead of only six. As I look back now upon the winter, I find the strongest impression I received was that of the singularly artificial, yet deeply vital and soundly healthy, character of the English social and political system as it now exists. It is one of the most *bizarre* outbirths of time, one of the most abnormal, in certain ways, and yet one of the most successful. I know nothing that so much confirms your philosophy as this spectacle

of an accumulation of individual initiatives *all preserved*. I hope both you and the Pillons are well. I shall never forget their friendliness, nor the spirit of human kindness that filled their household. I am ashamed to ask for letters from you, when after so long a silence I can myself give you so little that is of philosophic interest. But we must take long views; and, if life be granted, I shall do something yet, both in the way of reading and writing. Ever truly yours,

WM. JAMES.

At about this time Major Henry L. Higginson, then the junior partner in the banking house of Lee, Higginson & Company and soon to be widely known as the founder of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, undertook to look after the small patrimony which James had inherited. He tactfully assumed the initiative respecting whatever had to be done, and continued to render this friendly service as long as James lived. On his side James, who knew nothing about investments and was incapable of considering them without involving himself in excessive and unprofitable worry, was delighted to leave decisions to his friend's wiser judgment. Occasional jocose communications like the following came to be almost his only incursions into his own "affairs."

*To Henry L. Higginson.*

Oct. 14 [1883?].

MY DEAR HENRY,— I receive today from your office two documents, one containing some unintelligible hieroglyphics, "C. B. & Q., 138" etc., etc.; the other winding up with a statement that I owe you \$12,674.97!!

The latter explains your mysterious interest in my affairs. I feared as much! Go on, Shylock, go on! you have me in your power. The peculiar combination of ignorance

and poverty which I present makes me an easy victim. And I confess that as a psychologist I am curious to see how far your instincts of cupidity will carry you. I await eagerly the ulterior developments. Yours, etc.,

WM. JAMES.

[*Enclosed with the foregoing*]

Extract from a biographic sketch of W. J. soon to be published in the "Harvard Register":—

"He now fancied himself possessed of immense wealth, and gave without stint his imaginary riches. He has ever since been under gentle restraint, and leads a life not merely of happiness, but of bliss; converses rationally, reads the newspapers, where every talk of distress attracts his notice, and being furnished with an abundant supply of blank checks, he fills up one of them with a munificent sum, sends it off to the sufferer, and sits down to his dinner with a happy conviction that he has earned the right to a little indulgence in the pleasures of the table; and yet, on a serious conversation with one of his old friends, he is quite conscious of his real position; but the conviction is so exquisitely painful that he will not let himself believe it."

*To H. P. Bowditch.*

[Post-card]

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Jan. 31 [1884].

Heute den 31ten Januar wurde mir vor 2 Stunden in rascher Aufeinander-folge *ein*(1) wunderschöner jüdisch-aussehender, kräftiger und munterer Knabe geboren. Alles geht nach Wunsch, und bittet um stiller Theilnahme der glückliche Vater.

W. J.

[*Translation.*]

Today the 31st of January, two hours since, there was born to me in rapid succession *one* (1) wonderfully beautiful,

Jewish-looking, sturdy and lively boy. Everything is going as one would wish, and the happy father craves your hushed sympathy.

W. J.

*To Thomas Davidson.*

CAMBRIDGE, Mar. 30, 1884.

MY DEAR DAVIDSON,—I am in receipt of two letters from you since my last, the latest one of them from Capri. I am very sorry to hear of your continued bad physical condition. You have a queer constitution,—with such an unusual amount of strength in most ways,—to be a constant prey to ailment. I have long ago come to think that the right measure of a man's health is not how much comfort or discomfort he feels in the year, but how much work, through thick and thin, he manages to get through. Judged by that standard, you doubtless score an unusually high number. But when I hear you talking about Texas, I confess I really begin to feel alarmed. From Rome to Austin! How can you think of such a thing? Are you sure M — is not playing the part of the tailless fox in the fable? I know not a living soul in Texas, and if I did I should have moral scruples about becoming an accomplice in any plot for transporting you there. Why is it that everything in this world is offered us on no medium terms between either having too much of it or too little? You pine for a professorship. I pine for your leisure to write and study. Teaching duties have really devoured the whole of my time this winter, and with hardly any intellectual profit whatever. I have read nothing, and written nothing save one lecture on the freedom of the will. How it is going to end, I don't well see. The four months of non-lecturing study I had at home last year, when I slept well

and led a really intellectual life, seem like a sort of lost paradise. However, vacations make amends. This summer I am to edit my poor father's literary remains, "with a sketch of his writings" which will largely consist of extracts and no doubt help to the making him better known.

You ask why I don't write oftener. If you could see the arrears of work under which my table groans, and the number of semi-business letters and notes I now have to write with my infernal eyesight, you would ask no longer. In fact I am beginning to ask whether it be not my bounden duty to stop corresponding with my friends altogether. Only at that price does there seem to be any prospect of doing any reading at all.

I had neither seen your article in the *Unitarian Review*<sup>1</sup> nor heard of it, but ran for it as soon as I got your announcement of its existence. I know not what to think of it practically; though I confess the idea of engrafting the bloodless pallor of Boston Unitarianism on the Roman temperament strikes one at first sight as rather queer. Unitarianism seems to have a sort of moribund vitality here, because it is a branch of protestantism and the tree keeps the branch sticking out. But whether it could be grafted on a catholic trunk seems to me problematic. I confess I rather despair of any popular religion of a philosophic character; and I sometimes find myself wondering whether there can be any popular religion raised on the ruins of the old Christianity without the presence of that element which in the past has presided over the origin of all religions, namely, a belief in new *physical* facts and possibilities. Abstract considerations about the soul and the reality of a moral order will not do in a year what the glimpse into a world of new phenomenal possibilities enveloping those of the present

<sup>1</sup> *Unitarian Review*, Dec., 1883; vol. xx, p. 481.

life, afforded by an extension of our insight into the order of nature, would do in an instant. Are the much despised "Spiritualism" and the "Society for Psychical Research" to be the chosen instruments for a new era of faith? It would surely be strange if they were; but if they are not, I see no other agency that can do the work.

I like your formula that in consciousness there must be two irreducibles, "being and feeling," and nothing else. But I can't put philosophy into letters. When is our long-postponed talk to take place? *Aufgeschoben* for another summer, and I fear another winter too, from what you write. It is too bad!

We have a week's recess in a couple of days and I start to look up summer lodgings. Alice and the two-month-old baby are very well and send you love. Always truly yours,

WM. JAMES.

To G. H. Howison.

CAMBRIDGE, Feb. 5, 1885.

MY DEAR HOWISON,—I've just reread (for the fourth time, I believe) your letter of the 30th November. I need not say how tickled I am at your too generous words about my Divinity school address on Determinism.<sup>1</sup> Sweet are the praises of an enemy. There is, thank Heaven! a plane below all formulas and below enmities due to formulas, where men occasionally meet each other moving, and recognize each other as brothers inhabiting the *same depths*. Such is this depth of the *problem* of determinism — howe'er we solve it, we are brothers if we know it to be a *problem*. No man on either side awakens any sense of intellectual

<sup>1</sup> "The Dilemma of Determinism." *Unitarian Review*, Sept., 1884. Republished in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*.

respect in me who regards the solution as a cock-sure and immediately given thing, and wonders that any one should hesitate to choose his party. You find fault with my deterministic disjunction, "pessimism or subjectivism," and ask why I forgot the third way of "objective moral activity," etc. (You probably remember.) I did n't forget it. It entered for me into pessimism, for, since such activity has failed to be universally realized, it was (deterministically) *impossible from eternity*, and the Universe in so far forth not an object of pure worship, not an Absolute. My trouble, you see, lies with monism. Determinism = monism; and a monism like this world can't be an object of pure optimistic contemplation. By pessimism I simply mean *ultimate* non-optimism. The Ideal is only a part of this world. Make the world a Pluralism, and you forthwith have an object to worship. Make it a Unit, on the other hand, and worship and abhorrence are equally one-sided and equally legitimate reactions. *Indifferentism* is the true condition of such a world, and turn the matter how you will, I don't see how any philosophy of the Absolute can ever escape from that capricious alternation of mysticism and satanism in the treatment of its great Idol, which history has always shown. Reverence is an accidental personal mood in such a philosophy, and has naught to do with the essentials of the system. At least, so it seems to me; and in view of that, I prefer to stick in the wooden finitude of an ultimate pluralism, because that at least gives me something definite to worship and fight for.

However, I know I have n't exhausted all wisdom, and am too well aware that this position, like everything else, is a *parti pris* and a *pis aller*,—*faute de mieux*,—to continue the Gallic idiom. Your predecessor Royce thinks he's got the thing at last. It is too soon for me to criticize

his book; but I must say it seems to me one of the very freshest, profoundest, solidest, most human bits of philosophical work I've seen in a long time. In fact, it makes one think of Royce as a man from whom nothing is too great to expect.

Your list of thirty lectures makes one bow down in reverence before you. I should be afraid you were overworking. Your Hume-Kant circular shall be diligently scanned when my Hume lectures come off, in about six weeks. I am better as to the eyes, which gives me much hope. Am, however, "maturing" building plans for a house, which is bad for sleep. I do hope and trust there will be no "Enttäuschung" about Berkeley,<sup>1</sup> and that not only the work, but the place and the climate, may prove well adapted to both you and Mrs. Howison. Ever truly yours,

WM. JAMES.

The next letters relate to the "Literary Remains of Henry James," which had just been published, and in which William James had collected a number of his father's papers and edited them with an introductory essay on their author's philosophy. Needless to say, the two letters to Godkin have not been included among these with any thought of the unfortunate review to which they refer. They furnish too good an illustration of James's loyalty and magnanimity to be omitted. If more critics, and more of the criticized, were to cultivate the manliness and generosity with which James always entered discussion, there would be less reviewers "never-quite-forgiven," and less feuds in the world of science.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Howison had accepted an appointment at the University of California (Berkeley).



To E. L. Godkin.

CAMBRIDGE, [Feb.] 16, 1885.

MY DEAR GODKIN,— Does n't the impartiality which I suppose is striven for in the "Nation," sometimes overshoot the mark "and fall on t' other side"? Poor Harry's books seem always given out to critics with antipathy to his literary temperament; and now for this only and last review of my father — a writer exclusively religious — a personage seems to have been selected for whom the religious life is complete *terra incognita*. A severe review by one interested in the subject is one thing; a contemptuous review by one with the subject out of his sight is another.

Make no reply to this! One must disgorge his bile.

I was taken ill in Philadelphia the day after seeing you, and had to return home after some days without stopping in N.Y. I *may* get there the week after next, and if so shall claim *one* dinner, over which I trust no cloud will be cast by the beginning of this note! With best respects to Mrs. Godkin, always truly yours

WM. JAMES.

To E. L. Godkin.

CAMBRIDGE, Feb. 19, 1885.

MY DEAR GODKIN,— Your cry of remorse or regret is so "whole-souled" and complete that I should not be human were I not melted almost to tears by it, and sorry I "ever spoke to you as I did." I felt pretty sure that you had no positive oversight of the thing in this case, but I addressed you as the official head. And my *emotion* was less that of filial injury than of irritation at what seemed to me editorial stupidity in giving out the book to the wrong *sort* of person altogether — a Theist of some sort being the only proper reviewer. I am heartily sorry that the thing should have

distressed you so much more than it did me. You can take your consolation in the fact that it has now afforded you an opportunity for the display of those admirable qualities of the heart which your friends know, but which the ordinary readers of the "Nation" probably do not suspect to slumber beneath the gory surface of that savage sheet.

I hear that you are soon coming to give us some political economy. I am very glad on every account, and suppose Mrs. Godkin will come *mit*. Always truly yours

WM. JAMES.

*To Shadworth H. Hodgson.*

CAMBRIDGE, 20 Feb., 1885.

MY DEAR HODGSON,—Your letter of the 7th was most welcome. Anything responsive about my poor old father's writing falls most gratefully upon my heart. For I fear he found *me* pretty unresponsive during his lifetime; and that through my means any post-mortem response should come seems a sort of atonement. You would have enjoyed knowing him. I know of no one except Carlyle who had such a smiting *Ursprünglichkeit* of intuition, and such a deep sort of humor where human nature was concerned. He bowled one over in such a careless way. He was like Carlyle in being no *reasoner* at all, in the sense in which philosophers are reasoners. Reasoning was only an unfortunate necessity of exposition for them both. His *ideas*, however, were the exact inversion of Carlyle's; and he had nothing to correspond to Carlyle's insatiable learning of historic facts and memory. As you say, the world of his thought had a few elements and no others ever troubled him. *Those* elements were very deep ones, and had theological names. Under "Man" he would willingly have included all flesh, even that resident in Sirius or ethereal

worlds. But he felt no need of positively looking so far. He was the humanest and most genial being in his impulses whom I have ever personally known, and had a bigness and power of nature that everybody felt. I thank you heartily for your interest. I wish that somebody could *take up* something from his system into a system more articulately scientific. As it is, most people will feel the *presence* of something real and true for the while they read, and go away and presently, unable to dovetail [it] into their own framework, forget it altogether.

I am hoping to write you a letter ere long, a letter philosophical. I am going over Idealism again, and mean to review your utterances on the subject. You know that, to quote what Gurney said one evening, to attain to assimilating your thought is the chief purpose of one's life. But you know also how hard it is for the likes of me to write, and how much that is felt is unthought, and that as thought [it] goes and must go unspoken. Brother Royce tells me he has sent you his "Religious Aspect of Philosophy." He is a wonderfully powerful fellow, not yet thirty, and this book seems to me to have a real fresh smell of the Earth about it. You will enjoy it, I know. I am very curious to hear what you think of his brand-new argument for Absolute Idealism.

I and mine are well. But the precious time as usual slips away with little work done. Happy you, whose time is all your own!

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry James.*

CAMBRIDGE, Apr. 1, 1885.

. . . I am running along quite smoothly, and my eyes, —you never knew such an improvement! It has continued

gradually, so that practically I can use them all I will. It saves my life. *Why* it should come now, when, bully them as I would, it would n't come in the past few years, is one of the secrets of the nervous system which the last trump, but nothing earlier, may reveal. A week's recess begins today, and the day after tomorrow I shall start for the South Shore to look up summer quarters. I want to try how sailing suits me as a summer kill-time. The walking in Keene Valley suits me not, and driving is too "cost-playful." I have made a start with my psychology which I shall work at, temperately, through the vacation and hope to get finished a year from next fall, *sans faute*. Then shall the star of your romances be eclipsed! . . .

*To Shadworth H. Hodgson.*

NEWPORT, Dec. 30, 1885.

MY DEAR HODGSON,— I have just read your "Philosophy and Experience" address, and re-read with much care your "Dialogue on Free Will" in the last "Mind." I thank you kindly for the address. But is n't philosophy a sad mistress, estranging the more intimately those who in all other respects are most intimately united,— although 't is true she unites them afresh by their very estrangement! I feel for the first time now, after these readings, as if I might be catching sight of your foundations. Always hitherto has there been something elusive, a sense that what I caught could not be *all*. Now I feel as if it might be all, and yet for me 't is not enough.

Your "method" (which surely after *this* needs no additional expository touch) I seem at last to understand, but it shrinks in the understanding. For what is your famous "two aspects" principle more than the postulate that the world is thoroughly *intelligible* in nature? And what the

practical outcome of the distinction between *whatness* and *thatness* save the sending us to experience to ascertain the connections among things, and the declaration that no amount of insight into their intrinsic qualities will account for their existence? I can now get no more than that out of the method, which seems in truth to me an over-subtle way of getting at and expressing pretty simple truths, which others share who know nothing of your formulations. In fact your wondrously delicate retouchings and discriminations appear rather to darken the matter from the point of view of teaching. One gains much by the way, of course, that he would have lost by a shorter path, but one risks losing the end altogether. (I reserve what you say at the end of both articles about Conscience, etc.— which is original and beautiful and which I feel I have not yet assimilated. I will only ask whether all you say about the decisions of conscience implying a future verification does not hold of scientific decisions as well, so that *all* reflective *cognitive* judgments, as well as practical judgments, project themselves ideally into eternity?)

As for the Free Will article, I have very little to say, for it leaves entirely untouched what seems to me the only living issue involved. The paper is an exquisite piece of literary goldsmith's work,— nothing like it in that respect since Berkeley,— but it hangs in the air of speculation and touches not the earth of life, and the beautiful distinctions it keeps making gratify only the understanding which has no end in view but to exercise its eyes by the way. The distinctions between *vis impressa* and *vis insita*, and compulsion and "reaction" mean nothing in a monistic world; and any world is a monism in which the parts to come are, as they are in your world, absolutely involved and presupposed in the parts that are already given. Were such

a monism a palpable optimism, no man would be so foolish as to care whether it was predetermined or not, or to ask whether he was or was not what you call a "real agent." He would acquiesce in the flow and drift of things, of which he found himself a part, and rejoice that it was such a whole. The question of free will owes its entire being to a difficulty you disdain to notice, namely that we *cannot* rejoice in such a whole, for it is *not* a palpable optimism, and yet, if it be predetermined, we *must treat* it as a whole. Indeterminism is the only way to *break* the world into good parts and into bad, and to stand by the former as against the latter.

I can understand the determinism of the mere mechanical intellect which will not hear of a moral dimension to existence. I can understand that of mystical monism shutting its eyes on the concretes of life, for the sake of its abstract rapture. I can understand that of mental defeat and despair saying, "it's all a muddle, and here I go, along with it." I can *not* understand a determinism like yours, which rejoices in clearness and distinctions, and which is at the same time alive to moral ones — unless it be that the latter are purely speculative for it, and have little to do with its real feeling of the way life *is* made up.

For life *is* evil. Two souls are in my breast; I see the better, and in the very act of seeing it I do the worse. To say that the molecules of the nebula implied this and *shall have implied it* to all eternity, so often as it recurs, is to condemn me to that "dilemma" of pessimism or subjectivism of which I once wrote, and which seems to have so little urgency to you, and to which all talk about abstractions erected into entities; and compulsion *vs.* "freedom" are simply irrelevant. What living man cares for such niceties, when the real problem stares him in the face of how practically to meet a world foredone, with no possibilities left in it?

What a mockery then seems your distinction between determination and compulsion, between passivity and an "activity" every minutest feature of which is preappointed, both as to its *whatness* and as to its *thatness*, by what went before! What an insignificant difference then the difference between "impediments from within" and "impediments from without"! — between being fated to do the thing *willingly* or not! The point is not as to how it is done, but as to its being done at all. It seems a wrong complement to the rest of life, which rest of life (according to your precious "free-will determinism," as to any other fatalism), whilst shrieking aloud at its *whatness*, nevertheless exacts rigorously its *thatness* then and there. Is that a reasonable world from the moral point of view? And is it made more reasonable by the fact that when I brought about the *thatness* of the evil *whatness* decreed to come by the *thatness* of all else beside, I did so consentingly and aware of no "impediments outside of my own nature"? With what can I *side* in such a world as this? this monstrous indifferentism which brings forth everything *eodem jure*? Our nature demands something *objective* to take sides with. If the world is a Unit of this sort there *are* no sides — there's the moral rub! And you don't see it!

Ah, Hodgson! Hodgson *mio!* from whom I hoped so much! Most spirited, most clean, most thoroughbred of philosophers! *Perchè di tanto inganni i figli tuoi?*<sup>1</sup> If you want to reconcile us rationally to Determinism, write a Theodicy, reconcile us to *Evil*, but don't talk of the distinction between impediments from within and without when the within and the without of which you speak are both within that *Whole* which is the only real agent in your

<sup>1</sup> "Why so heartlessly deceive your sons?"

LEOPARDI, *To Sylvia*.

philosophy. There is no such superstition as the idolatry of the *Whole*.

I originally finished this letter on sheet number one — but it occurred to me afterwards that the end was too short, so I scratched out the first lines of the crossed writing, and refer you now to what follows them.—[*Lines from sheet number 1.*] It makes me sick at heart, this discord among the only men who ought to agree. I am the more sick this moment as I must write to your ancient foe (at least the stimulus to an old “Mind” article of yours), one F. E. Abbot who recently gave me his little book “Scientific Theism” — the burden of his life — which makes me groan that I cannot digest a word of it. Farewell! Heaven bless you all the same — and enable you to forgive me. We are well and I hope you are the same. Ever faithfully yours,

W.J.

[*From the final sheet.*] Let me add a wish for a happy New Year and the expression of my undying regard. You are tenfold more precious to me now that I have braved you thus! Adieu!

*To Carl Stumpf.*

CAMBRIDGE, Jan. 1, 1886.

MY DEAR STUMPF,— . . . Let me tell you of my own fate since I wrote you last. It has been an eventful and in some respects a sad year. We lost our youngest child in the summer — the flower of the flock, 18 months old — with a painful and lingering whooping-cough complicated with pneumonia. My wife has borne it like an angel, however, which is something to be thankful for. Her mother, close to whom we have always lived, has had a severe pulmonary illness, which has obliged her to repair



to Italy for health. She is now on the Ocean, with her youngest and only unmarried daughter, the second one having only a month ago become the wife of that [W. M.] Salter whose essays on ethics have lately been translated by von Gizycki in Berlin. So I have gained him as a brother-in-law, and regard it as a real gain. I have also gained a full Professorship with an increase of pay, and have moved into a larger and more commodious house.<sup>1</sup> My eyes, too, are much better than they were a year ago, and I am able to do more work, so there is plenty of sweet as well as bitter in the cup.

I don't know whether you have heard of the London "Society for Psychical Research," which is seriously and laboriously investigating all sorts of "supernatural" matters, clairvoyance, apparitions, etc. I don't know what you think of such work; but I think that the present condition of opinion regarding it is scandalous, there being a mass of testimony, or apparent testimony, about such things, at which the only men capable of a critical judgment — men of scientific education — will not even look. We have founded a similar society here within the year,— some of us thought that the publications of the London society deserved at least to be treated as if worthy of experimental disproof,— and although work advances very slowly owing to the small amount of disposable time on the part of the members, who are all very busy men, we have already stumbled on some rather inexplicable facts out of which something may come. It is a field in which the sources of deception are extremely numerous. But I believe there is no source of deception in the investigation of nature which can compare with a fixed belief that certain kinds of phenomenon are *impossible*.

<sup>1</sup> From 15 Appian Way to 18 Garden Street.

My teaching is much the same as it was — a little better in quality, I hope. I enjoy very much a new philosophic colleague, Josiah Royce, from California, who is just thirty years old and a perfect little Socrates for wisdom and humor. I still try to write a little psychology, but it is exceedingly slow work. No sooner do I get interested than bang! goes my sleep, and I have to stop a week or ten days, during which my ideas get all cold again. Nothing so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task. . . . I try to spend two hours a day in a laboratory for psychophysics which I started last year, but of which I fear the *fruits* will be slow in ripening, as my experimental aptitude is but small. But I am convinced that one must guard in some such way as that against the growing tendency to *subjectivism* in one's thinking, as life goes on. I am hypnotizing, on a large scale, the students, and have hit one or two rather pretty unpublished things of which some day I hope I may send you an account. . . . Ever faithfully yours,

WM. JAMES.

When the American Society for Psychical Research was organized in Boston in the autumn of 1884, Thomas Davidson wrote to comment on its apparent anti-spiritual bias. In the following reply, dated February 1, 1885, but more easily understood if inserted here out of its chronological place, James defined the society's conception of its function. In so doing he described his own attitude toward psychical research quite exactly: —

“As for any ‘antispiritual bias’ of our Society, no theoretic basis, or *bias* of any sort whatever, so far as I can make out, exists in it. The one thing that has struck me all along in the men who have had to do with it is their complete colorlessness philosophically. They seem to have no preferences

for any general *ism* whatever. I doubt if this could be matched in Europe. Anyhow, it would make no difference in the important work to be done, what theoretic bias the members had. For I take it the urgent thing, to rescue us from the present disgraceful condition, is to ascertain in a manner so thorough as to constitute *evidence* that will be accepted by outsiders, just what the *phenomenal conditions of certain* concrete phenomenal occurrences are. Not till that is done, can spiritualistic or anti-spiritualistic theories be even mooted. I'm sure that the more we can steer clear of theories at first, the better. The choice of officers was largely dictated by motives of policy. Not that scientific men are necessarily better judges of all truth than others, but that their adhesion would popularly seem better *evidence* than the adhesion of others, in the matter. And what we want is not only truth, but evidence. We shall be lucky if our scientific names don't grow discredited the instant they subscribe to any 'spiritual' manifestations. But how much easier to discredit literary men, philosophers or clergymen! I think Newcomb, for President, was an uncommon hit — if he believes, he will probably carry others. You'd better chip in, and not complicate matters by talking either of spiritualism or anti-spiritualism. '*Facts*' are what are wanted."

*To Henry James.*

CAMBRIDGE, May 9, 1886.

MY DEAR HARRY,— I seize my pen the first leisure moment I have had for a week to tell you that I have read "The Bostonians" in the full flamingness of its bulk, and consider it an exquisite production. My growling letter was written to you before the end of Book I had appeared in the "Atlantic"; and the suspense of narrative in that

region, to let the relation of Olive and Verena grow, was enlarged by the vacant months between the numbers of the magazine, so that it seemed to me so slow a thing had ne'er been writ. Never again shall I attack one of your novels in the magazine. I've only read one number of the "Princess Casamassima" — though I hear all the people about me saying it is the best thing you've done yet. To return to "The Bostonians"; the two last books are simply sweet. There is n't a hair wrong in Verena, you've made her neither too little nor too much — but absolutely *liebenswürdig*. It would have been so easy to spoil her picture by some little excess or false note. Her moral situation, between Woman's rights and Ransom, is of course deep, and her discovery of the truth on the Central Park day, etc., inimitably given. Ransom's character, which at first did not become alive to me, does so, handsomely, at last. In Washington, Hay told me that Secretary Lamar was delighted with it; Hay himself ditto, but especially with "Casamassima." I enclose a sheet from a letter of Gurney's but just received. You see how seriously he takes it. And I suppose he's right from a profoundly serious point of view, — *i.e.*, he would be right if the characters were real, — but as the story stands, I don't feel his objection. The *fancy* is more tickled by R.'s victory being complete. I hear very little said of the book, and I imagine it is being less read than its predecessors. The truth about it, combining what I said in my previous letter with what I have just written, seems to be this, that it is superlatively well done, provided one admits that method of doing such a thing at all. Really the *datum* seems to me to belong rather to the region of fancy, but the treatment to that of the most elaborate realism. One can easily imagine the story cut out and made into a bright, short, sparkling thing

of a hundred pages, which would have been an absolute success. But you have worked it up by dint of descriptions and psychologic commentaries into near 500 — charmingly done for those who have the leisure and the peculiar mood to enjoy that amount of miniature work — but perilously near to turning away the great majority of readers who crave more matter and less art. I can truly say, however, that as I have lain on my back after dinner each day for ten days past reading it to myself, my enjoyment has been complete. I imagine that inhabitants of other parts of the country have read it more than natives of these parts. They have bought it for the sake of the information. The way you have touched off the bits of American nature, Central Park, the Cape, etc., is exquisitely true and calls up just the feeling. Knowing you had done such a good thing makes the meekness of your reply to me last summer all the more wonderful.

I cannot write more — being much overloaded and in bad condition. The spring is opening deliciously — all the trees half out, and the white, bright, afternoon east winds beginning. Our household is well. . . .

Don't be alarmed about the labor troubles here. I am quite sure they are a most healthy phase of evolution, a little costly, but normal, and sure to do lots of good to all hands in the end. I don't speak of the senseless "anarchist" riot in Chicago, which has nothing to do with "Knights of Labor," but is the work of a lot of pathological Germans and Poles. I'm amused at the anti-Gladstonian capital which the English papers are telegraphed to be making of it. All the Irish names are among the killed and wounded policemen. Almost every anarchist name is Continental. Affectly,

W. J.

James read "The Bostonians," and wrote to his brother about it, with that special shade of detachment which is peculiar to fraternal judgments. He was less careful to measure his praise when he wrote to other authors about their novels.

*To W. D. Howells.*

JAFFREY, N.H., July 21, 1886.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,— I "snatch" a moment from the limitless vacation peace and leisure in which I lie embedded and which does n't leave me "time" for anything, to tell you that I have been reading your "Indian Summer," and that it has given me about as exquisite a kind of delight as anything I ever read in my life, in the line to which it belongs. How you tread the narrow line of nature's truth so infallibly is more than I can understand. Then the profanity, the humor, the humanity, the morality — the everything! In short, 't is cubical, and set it up any way you please 't will stand. That blessed young female made me squeal at every page. How *can* you have got back to the conversations of your prime?

But I won't discriminate or analyze. This is only meant for an inarticulate cry of *viva Howells*. I repeat it: long live Howells! God grant you may do as good things again! I don't believe you can do better.

With warmest congratulations to Mrs. Howells that you *and* she were born, I am ever yours,

WM. JAMES.

Mr. Howells called such letters "whoops of blessing." When a new book pleased James particularly, he was apt to send a "whoop" to its author.

With respect to the next letter, it will be recalled that Croom Robertson was the Editor of "Mind." Richard Hodgson was later for many years the Secretary of the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research, in Boston. He became a warm friend. Other allusions to him occur later.

*To G. Croom Robertson.*

*Aug. 13, 1886.*

MY DEAR ROBERTSON,— . . . I have just been reading the last number of "Mind," and find it rather below par. R. Hodgson muddled, clotted, dusky and ineffectual, save for a gleam or two of light in as many separate points. How can an adult man spend his time in trying to torture an accurate meaning into Spencer's incoherent accidentalities? It is so much more easy to do the work over for oneself. I rubbed my eyes at the Macdonald paper, as a dim sense came over me that it might be a Divinity student who "sat under" me for a part of last year. I ween it is. Little did I know the viper I was nourishing. Why don't you have a special "Neo-Hegelian Department" in "Mind," like the "Children's Department" or the "Agricultural Department" in our newspapers — which educated readers skip? With Montgomery's paper I am for the most part in warm sympathy, though he might make a discrimination or two more. I'm sorry I've not yet read his first number. His non-empirical style, so different from that of the British school, will stand in the way of his views' deglutition by the ordinary reader. I've got the same stuff all neatly down in black and white, in a very empirical style, which alas! must wait perhaps years till the other chapters are finished. However, in these matters, no matter how much

different men strike the same vein, they do it in such different *ways*, that no one of them absolutely supersedes the need of the others.

Davidson I saw the other day in Cambridge. He was fresh from the Concord School, where they had been belaboring Goethe as their *pièce de résistance* and topping off with pantheism as dessert. He had read aloud a paper of Montgomery's against pantheism, as well as one of his own on Goethe's Titanism. Montgomery's is shortly to appear in a journal here. I am rather curious to read it.

To go on with "Mind," Hull's paper (Donaldson's) is refreshing. X—— is a little stub-and-twist fellow who also sat under me last year, and now has a fellowship for next year. He is a silent, mannerless little cub, but has first-rate stuff in him, I think, as an original worker; theological training. Have you had time yet to look into Royce's book? Royce seems to me to be a man of the greatest promise, performance too, in that book. I wish you would have it worthily reviewed.

Here I have run on about the accidents of the hour, instead of the eternal things of the soul. No matter; all is a symbol, and these words will probably waft my presence somehow into yours. . . .

Pray drop me even a short line soon, to let me know about you and Mrs. Robertson. I've heard nothing of you, even, for many months. Have n't you a brother, or something, to send over here, since there seems no hope of having you yourself? Gurney wrote the other day that he was about to send his brother.

Farewell! I think of you both often, and am with heartiest affection, Yours always,

WM. JAMES.



*To Shadworth H. Hodgson.*

JAFFREY, N.H., *Sept.* 12, 1886.

MY DEAR HODGSON,—I ought long ere this to have written you a genuine letter in reply to your two of Feb. 3, *respective* March 6. (The latter by the way came to me many weeks too late, all blurred and water-stained, with a notice gummed on it telling as how it had been rescued from the Oregon sunken on the bottom of the Ocean. This makes it ex- as well as in-trinsically interesting, and does honor to our nineteenth-century post-office perfection.) I suppose one reason for my procrastination has been the shrinking-back of the fleshly man from another gnashing of the teeth over the free-will business. I have just been reading your letters again, and beautiful letters they are — also your pregnant little paper on Monism. But I'm blest if they make me budge an inch from my inveterate way of looking at the question. I hate to think that controversy should be useless, and arguments of no avail, but the history of opinion on this problem is ominous; so I will be very short, hardly more than "yea, yea! nay, nay!"

The subject of my concern seems entirely different from yours. I care absolutely nothing whether there be "agents" or no agents, or whether man's actions be really "*his*" or not.

What I care for is that my moral reactions should find a real outward application. All those who, like you, hold that the world is a system of "uniform law" which repels all variation as so much "chaos," oblige, it seems to me, the world to be judged integrally. Now the only *integral* emotional reaction which can be called forth by such a world as this of our experience, is that of dramatic or melodramatic interest — romanticism — which *is* the emotional reaction upon it of all intellects who are neither religious nor moral.

The moment you seek to go deeper, you must break the world into parts, the parts that seem good and those that seem bad. Whatever Indian mystics may say about overcoming the bonds of good and evil, for *us* there is no higher synthesis in which their contradiction merges, no *one* way of judging that world which holds them both. Either close your eyes and adopt an optimism or a pessimism equally daft; or exclude moral categories altogether from a place in the world's definition, which leaves the world *unheimlich*, reptilian, and foreign to man; or else, sticking to it that the moral judgment *is* applicable, give up the hope of applying it to the *whole*, and admit that, whilst some parts are good, others are bad, and being bad, *ought* not to have been, "argal," possibly *might* not have been. In short, be an indeterminist on moral grounds with which the differences between compulsory or spontaneous uniformity and perceptive and conceptive order have absolutely nothing to do.

But enough! I am far beyond the yea and nay I promised, and feel more like gossiping with you as a friend than wrangling with you as a foe. I hope things are going well with you in these months and that politics have not exasperated you beyond the possibility of philosophizing. . . . I got successfully through the academic year, in spite of the fact that I wasted a great deal of time on "psychical research" and had other interruptions from work which I would fain have done. I intend *per fas aut nefas* to make more time for myself next year. The family is very well; and with the exception of an attack of illness of a couple of weeks, the vacation has been a delightful and beneficial one. I wish I could live in the country all the year round, or rather nine months of it. When I retire from the harness, if that ever happens, I probably shall.

I have just been on a little trip to the White Mountains and may possibly buy a small farm which I saw in a convenient and romantic neighborhood. New England farms are now dirt cheap — the natives going West, the Irish coming in and making a better living than the Yankees could. Here were seventy-five acres of land, two thirds of it oak and pine timber, one third hay, a splendid spring of water, fair little house and large barn, close to a beautiful lake and under a mountain 3500 feet high, four and a half hours from Boston, for 900 dollars! A rivulet of great beauty runs through it. I am only waiting to see if I can get the strip between it and the lake shore to buy. . . .

I have just read, with infinite zest and stimulation, Bradley's "Logic." I suppose you have read it. It is surely "epoch-making" in English philosophy. Both empiricists and pan-rationalists must settle their accounts with it. It breaks up all the traditional lines. And what a fighter the cuss is! Do you know him? What is he personally? Whether churlish and sour, or simply redundantly ironical and irrepressible, I can't make out from his polemic tone; but should apprehend the former. It will be long ere I settle my accounts with his book.

Well! adieu and good luck to you, in spite of your viciousness in the matter of determinism! Send me all you write and believe me as ever, Always most affectionately yours,

WM. JAMES.

With respect to the next letter, and others to James's sister, which follow, it should now be explained that Miss Alice James had gone abroad in 1885. The illness which was the cause of her journey developed more and more serious complications. Being near her brother Henry in England, she stayed on there during the remaining six years

of her life. In spite of much suffering, she never let herself adopt an invalidish tone,<sup>1</sup> but kept her attention turned toward things outside her sick-room, and was apt to greet expressions of commiseration in a way to discourage their repetition — as the following letter testifies. “K. P. L.” was a devoted friend, Miss Katharine P. Loring of Boston; “A. K.” was the Aunt Kate mentioned in early letters.

*To his Sister.*

CAMBRIDGE, Feb. 5, 1887.

DEAREST ALICE,— Your card and, a day or two later, K. P. L.’s letter to A. K., have made us acquainted with your sad tumble-down, for which I am sorrier than I can express, and can only take refuge in the hope, incessantly

<sup>1</sup> “It’s amusing to see how, even upon my microscopic field, minute events are perpetually taking place illustrative of the broadest facts of human nature. Yesterday Nurse and I had a good laugh, but I must allow that decidedly she ‘had’ me. I was thinking of something that interested me very much, and my mind was suddenly flooded by one of those luminous waves that sweep out of consciousness all but the living sense, and overpower one with joy in the rich, throbbing complexity of life, when suddenly I looked up at Nurse, who was dressing me, and saw her primitive, rudimentary expression (so common here), as of no inherited quarrel with her destiny of putting petticoats over my head; the poverty and deadness of it, contrasted to the tide of speculation that was coursing through my brain, made me exclaim, ‘Oh, Nurse, don’t you wish you were inside of me?’ Her look of dismay, and vehement disclaimer — ‘Inside of you, Miss, when you have just had a sick-headache for five days!’ — gave a greater blow to my vanity than that much-battered article has ever received. The headache had gone off in the night and I had clean forgotten it when the little wretch confronted me with it, at this sublime moment, when I was feeling within me the potency of a Bismarck, and left me powerless before the immutable law that, however great we may seem to our own consciousness, no human being would exchange his for ours, and before the fact that *my* glorious rôle was to stand for *sick-headache* to mankind! What a grotesque being I am, to be sure, lying in this room, with the resistance of a thistle-down, having illusory moments of throbbing with the pulse of the race, the mystery to be solved at the next breath, and the fountain of all happiness within me — the sense of vitality, in short, simply proportionate to the excess of weakness. To sit by and watch these absurdities is amusing in its way, and reminds me of how I used to *listen* to my ‘company manners’ in the days when I had ‘em, and how ridiculous they sounded.

“Ah! Those strange people who have the courage to be unhappy! *Are* they unhappy, by the way?” [From a diary of Alice James’s.]

springing up again from its ashes, that you will "recuperate" more promptly than of late has been the case. I'm glad, at any rate, that it has got you into Harry's lodgings for a while, and hope your next permanent arrangement will prove better than the last. When, as occasionally happens, I have a day of headache, or of real sickness like that of last summer at Mrs. Dorr's, I think of you whose whole life is woven of that kind of experience, and my heart sinks at the horizon that opens, and wells over with pity. But when all is over, the longest life appears short; and we had better drink the cup, whatever it contains, for it *is* life. But I will not moralize or sympathize, for fear of awakening more "screams of laughter" similar to those which you wrote of as greeting my former attempts.

We have had but one letter from Harry — soon after his arrival at Florence. I hope he has continued to get pleasure and profit from his outing. I have n't written to him since he left London, nor do I now write him a special letter, but the rest of this is meant for him as well as you, and if he is still to be away, you will forward it to him. We are getting along very well, on the whole, I keeping very continuously occupied, but not seeming to get ahead much, *for the days grow so short* with each advancing year. A day is now about a minute — hardly time to turn round in. Mrs. Gibbens arrived from Chicago last night, and in ten days she and Margaret will start, with our little Billy, for Aiken, S.C., to be gone till May. B. is asthmatic, she is glad to go south for her own sake, and the open-air life all day long will be much better for him than our arduous winter and spring. He is the most utterly charming little piece of human nature you ever saw, so packed with life, impatience, and feeling, that I think Father must have been just like him at his age. . . .

I have been paying ten or eleven visits to a mind-cure doctress, a sterling creature, resembling the "Venus of Medicine," Mrs. Lydia E. Pinkham,<sup>1</sup> made solid and veracious-looking. I sit down beside her and presently drop asleep, whilst she disentangles the snarls out of my mind. She says she never saw a mind with so many, so agitated, so restless, etc. She said my *eyes*, mentally speaking, kept revolving like wheels in front of each other and in front of my face, and it was four or five sittings ere she could get them *fixed*. I am now, *unconsciously to myself*, much better than when I first went, etc. I thought it might please you to hear an opinion of my mind so similar to your own. Meanwhile what boots it to be made unconsciously better, yet all the while consciously to lie awake o' nights, as I still do?

Lectures are temporarily stopped and examinations begun. I seized the opportunity to go to my Chocorua place and see just what was needed to make it habitable for the summer. It is a goodly little spot, but we may not, after all, fit up the buildings till we have spent a summer in the place and "studied" the problem a little more closely. The snow was between two and three feet deep on a level, in spite of the recent thaws. The day after I arrived was one of the most crystalline purity, and the mountain simply exquisite in gradations of tint. I have a tenant in the house, one Sanborn, who owes me a dollar and a half a month, but can't pay it, being of a poetic and contemplative rather than of an active nature, and consequently excessively poor. He has a sign out "Attorney and Pension Agent," and writes and talks like one of the greatest of men. He was working the sewing machine when I was there, and talking

<sup>1</sup> Whose picture used to adorn the numerous advertisements of a patent medicine called "Mrs. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."

of his share in the war, and why he did n't go to live in Boston, etc. (namely that he was n't known), and my heart was heavy in my breast that so rich a nature, fitted to inhabit a tropical dreamland, should have nothing but that furnitureless cabin within and snow and sky without, to live upon. For, however spotlessly pure and dazzlingly lustrous snow may be, pure snow, always snow, and naught but snow, for four months on end, is, it must be confessed, a rather lean diet for the human soul — deficient in variety, chiaroscuro, and oleaginous and medieval elements. I felt as I was returning home that some intellectual inferiority *ought* to accrue to all populations whose environment for many months in the year consisted of pure snow.— You are better off, better off than you know, in that great black-earthed dunghill of an England. I say naught of politics, war, strikes, railroad accidents or public events, unless the departure of C. W. Eliot and his wife for a year in Europe be a public event. . . .

Well, dear old Alice, I hope and pray for you. Lots of love to Harry, and if Katharine is with you, to her. Yours ever,

W. J.

*To Carl Stumpf.*

CAMBRIDGE, 6 Feb., 1887.

MY DEAR STUMPF,— Your two letters from Rügen of Sept. 8th, and from Halle of Jan. 2 came duly, and I can assure you that their contents was most heartily appreciated, and not by me alone. I fairly squealed with pleasure over the first one and its rich combination of good counsel and humorous commentary, and read the greater part of it to my friend Royce, assistant professor of philosophy here, who enjoyed it almost as much as I. There is a heartiness and solidity

about your letters which is truly German, and makes them as nutritious as they are refreshing to receive. Your *Kater-Gefühl*,<sup>1</sup> however, in your second letter, about your *Auslassungen*<sup>2</sup> on the subject of Wundt, amused me by its speedy evolution into *Auslassungen* more animated still. I can well understand why Wundt should make his compatriots impatient. Foreigners can afford to be indifferent for he does n't *crowd* them so much. He aims at being a sort of Napoleon of the intellectual world. Unfortunately he will never have a Waterloo, for he is a Napoleon without genius and with no central idea which, if defeated, brings down the whole fabric in ruin. You remember what Victor Hugo says of Napoleon in the *Miserables* — “Il gênait Dieu”; Wundt only *gêners* his *confrères*; and whilst they make mincemeat of some one of his views by their criticism, he is meanwhile writing a book on an entirely different subject. Cut him up like a worm, and each fragment crawls; there is no *nœud vital* in his mental medulla oblongata, so that you can't kill him all at once.

But surely you must admit that, since there must be professors in the world, Wundt is the most praiseworthy and never-too-much-to-be-respected type of the species. He is n't a genius, he is a *professor* — a being whose duty is to know everything, and have his own opinion about everything, connected with his *Fach*. Wundt has the most prodigious faculty of appropriating and preserving knowledge, and as for opinions, he takes *au grand sérieux* his duties there. He says of each possible subject, “Here I must have an opinion. Let's see! What shall it be? How many possible opinions are there? three? four? Yes!

<sup>1</sup> The state of self-reproachful irritation described by *Kater-Gefühl* cannot be justly rendered by any English word.

<sup>2</sup> Outbursts.



just four! Shall I take one of these? It will seem more original to take a higher position, a sort of *Vermittelungsansicht*<sup>1</sup> between them all. That I will do, etc., etc." So he acquires a complete assortment of opinions of his own; and, as his memory is so good, he seldom forgets which they are! But this is not reprehensible; it is admirable — from the professorial point of view. To be sure, one gets tired of that point of view after a while. But was there ever, since Christian Wolff's time, such a model of the German Professor? He has utilized to the uttermost fibre every gift that Heaven endowed him with at his birth, and made of it all that mortal pertinacity could make. He is the finished example of how much mere *education* can do for a man. Beside him, Spencer is an ignoramus as well as a charlatan. I admit that Spencer is occasionally more *amusing* than Wundt. His "Data of Ethics" seems to me incomparably his best book, because it is a more or less frank expression of the man's personal *ideal of living* — which has of course little to do with science, and which, in Spencer's case, is full of definiteness and vigor. Wundt's "Ethics" I have not yet seen, and probably shall not "tackle" it for a good while to come.

I was much entertained by your account of F —, of whom you have seen much more than I have. I am eager to see him, to hear about his visit to Halle, and to get his account of you. But [F.'s place of abode] and Boston are ten hours asunder by rail, and I never go there and he never comes here. He seems a very promising fellow, with a good deal of independence of character; and if you knew the conditions of education in this country, and of the preparation to fill chairs of philosophy in colleges, you would not express any surprise at his, or mine, or any other

<sup>1</sup> Mediatory attitude (view).

American's small amount of "Information über die philosophische Literatur." Times are mending, however, and within the past six or eight years it has been possible, in three or four of our colleges, to get really educated for philosophy as a profession. The most promising man we have in this country is, in my opinion, the above-mentioned Royce, a young Californian of thirty, who is really built for a metaphysician, and who is, besides that, a very complete human being, alive at every point. He wrote a novel last summer, which is now going through the press, and which I am very curious to see. He has just been in here, interrupting this letter, and I have told him he must send a copy of his book, the "Religious Aspect of Philosophy," to you, promising to urge you to read it when you had time. The first half is ethical, and very readable and full of profound and witty details, but to my mind not of vast importance philosophically. The second half is a new argument for monistic idealism, an argument based on the possibility of truth and error in knowledge, subtle in itself, and rather lengthily expounded, but seeming to me to be one of the few big original suggestions of recent philosophical writing. I have vainly tried to escape from it. I still suspect it of inconclusiveness, but I frankly confess that I am *unable* to overthrow it. Since you too are an anti-idealist, I wish very much you would try your critical teeth upon it. I can assure you that, if you come to close quarters with it, you will say its author belongs to the genuine philosophic breed.

I am myself doing very well this year, rather light work, etc., but still troubled with bad sleep so as to advance very slowly with private study and writing. However, few days without a line at least. I found to my surprise and pleasure that Robertson was willing to print my chapter on Space

in "Mind," even though it should run through all four numbers of the year.<sup>1</sup> So I sent it to him. Most of it was written six or even seven years ago. To tell the truth, I am *off* of Space now, and can probably carry my little private ingenuity concerning it no farther than I have already done in this essay; and fearing that some evil fiend might put it into Helmholtz's mind to correct all his errors and tell the full truth in the new edition of his "Optics," I felt it was high time that what I had written should see the light and not be lost. It is dry stuff to read, and I hardly dare to recommend it to you; but if you do read it, there is no one whose favorable opinion I should more rejoice to hear; for, as you know, you seem to me, of all writers on Space, the one who, on the whole, has thought out the subject most *philosophically*. Of course, the experimental patience, and skill and freshness of observation of the Helmholtzes and Herings are altogether admirable, and perhaps at bottom *worth* more than philosophic ability. Space is really a direfully difficult subject! The third dimension bothers me very much still.

I have this very day corrected the proofs of an essay on the Perception of Time,<sup>2</sup> which I will send you when it shall appear in the "Journal of Speculative Philosophy" for October last. (The number of "July, 1886" is not yet out!) I rather enjoyed the writing of it. I have just begun a chapter on "Discrimination and Comparison," subjects which have been long stumbling-blocks in my path. Yesterday it seemed to me that I could perhaps do nothing better than just translate 6 and 7 of the first *Abschnitt* of your "Tonpsychologie," which is worth more than everything else

<sup>1</sup> "The Perception of Space." *Mind*, 1887; vol. XII, pp. 1-30, 183-211, 321-353, 516-548.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 1886, vol. XX, p. 374.

put together which has been written on the subject. But I will stumble on and try to give it a more personal form. I shall, however, borrow largely from you. . . .

Have you seen [Edmund] Gurney's two bulky tomes, "Phantasms of the Living," an amazingly patient and thorough piece of work? I should not at all wonder if it were the beginning of a new department of natural history. But even if not, it is an important chapter in the statistics of *Völkerpsychologie*, and I think Gurney worthy of the highest praise for his devotion to this unfashionable work. He is not the kind of stuff which the ordinary pachydermatous fanatic and mystic is made of. . . .

To Henry P. Bowditch.

[Post-card]

CAMBRIDGE, Mar. 26 [1887].

My live-stock is increased by a *Töchterchen*, modest, tactful, unselfish, quite different from a boy, and in fact a really *epochmachendes Erzeugniss*.<sup>1</sup> I shall begin to save for her dowry and perhaps your Harold will marry her. Their ages are suitable.

Grüsse an die gnädige Frau.

W. J.

To Henry James.

CAMBRIDGE, Apr. 12, 1887.

MY DEAR HARRY,— . . . I got back yesterday from five days spent at my sylvan home at Lake Chocorua, whither I had gone to see about getting the buildings in order for the summer. The winter has been an exceptionally snowy one back of the coast, and I found, when I arrived, four feet of snow on a level and eight feet where it had drifted.

<sup>1</sup> Epochmaking manifestation.

The day before yesterday the heat became summer-like, and I took a long walk in my shirt-sleeves, going through the snow the whole length of my leg when the crust broke. It was a queer combination — not exactly agreeable. The snow-blanket keeps the ground from freezing deep; so that very few days after the snow is gone the soil is dry, and spring begins in good earnest. I tried snow-shoes but found them clumsy. They were making the maple-sugar in the woods; I had excellent comfort at the hotel hard by; with whose good landlord and still better landlady I am good friends; I rested off the fumes of my lore-crammed brain, and altogether I smile at the pride of Greece and Rome — from the height of my New Hampshire home. I'm afraid it will cost nearer \$2000 than \$800 to finish all the work. But we shall have ten large rooms (two of them 24 x 24), and three small ones — not counting kitchen, pantries, etc., and if you want some real, roomy, rustic happiness, you had better come over and spend all your summers with us. I can see that the thought makes you sick, so I'll say no more about it; but my permanent vision of your future is that your pen will fail you as a means of support, and, having laid up no income, you will return like the prodigal son to my roof. You will then find that, with a wood-pile as large as an ordinary house, a hearth four feet wide, and the American sun flooding the floor, even a New Hampshire winter is not so bad a thing. With house provided, two or three hundred dollars a year will support a man comfortably enough at Tamworth Iron Works, which is the name of our township. But, enough! My vulgarity makes you shudder. . . .

College begins tomorrow, and there are seven weeks more of lectures. I never did my work so easily as this year, and hope to write two more chapters of psychology ere the

vacation. That immortal work is now more than two thirds done. To you, who throw off two volumes a year, I must seem despicable for my slowness. But the truth is that (leaving other impediments out of account) the "science" is in such a confused and imperfect state that every paragraph presents some unforeseen snag, and I often spend many weeks on a point that I did n't foresee as a difficulty at all. American scholarship is looking up in that line. Three first-class works, in point both of originality and of learning, have appeared here within four months. Stanley Hall's and mine will make five. Meanwhile in England they are doing little or nothing. The "psychical researchers" seem to be the only active investigators. . . .

*To his Sister.*

CHOCORUA, N.H., July 2, 1887.

DEAREST SISTER,—It is an unconscionable time since I have written either to you or to Harry. Too little eyesight, and too much use thereof, is the reason. I thought I should go wild during the examination period. I have now got some presbyopic spectacles and hope for an improvement. I think I've been straining my eyes for three or four months past by not having them on.

A short dictated letter from you came the other day, and has been sent back to Alice in Cambridge, so I cannot give its date. I am grieved in the extreme to hear of another breakdown in your health. . . . But I make no sympathetic comment, as you would probably "roar" over it. There is this to be said, that it is probably less tragic to be sick all the time than to be sometimes well and incessantly tumbling down again.

I thought of the difference in our lots yesterday as I was driving home in the evening with a wagon in tow, which I

had started at six-thirty to get at a place called Fryeburg, 19 miles away. All day in the open air, talking with the country people, trying horses which they had to swap, but concluding to stick to my own — a most blessed feeling of freedom, and change from Cambridge life. I never knew before how much freedom came with having a horse of one's own. I am becoming quite an expert jockey, having examined and tried at least two dozen horses in the last six weeks; and I don't know a more fascinating occupation. The day before yesterday, I spent most of both forenoon and afternoon in the field under the blazing sun, sprinkling my potato plants with Paris green. The house comes on slowly, but in a fortnight we shall surely be inside of the larger half of it, and the rest can then drag on. Three or four men can't get ahead very fast. It has some delightful rooms, and, I have no doubt, will make us all happy for several years to come. Not for eternity, for everything fades, and I can see that some day we shall be glad to sell out and move on, to something grander, perhaps. For simple harmonious loveliness, however, this can't be beat. . . .

What a grotesque sort of time you have been having with your Queen's jubilee! What a chance for a woman to give some human shove to things, by the smallest *real* word or act, and what incapacity to guess its existence or to profit by it! One can see the ground for Bonaparte-worship, when one contemplates the results of the orthodox and conservative crowned-head education. He, at least, could have dropped an unconventional word, done something to pierce the cuticle. But the density of British unintellectuality is a spectacle for gods. One can't imagine it or describe it. One can only *see* it. . . .

W. J.

Such enterprises as the horse-swapping just alluded to were not always conducted with that circumspection which marks your true horse-trader. The companion of one search for a horse reported James as accosting a man whom he met driving along the road and asking, "Do you know anyone who wants to sell a horse?" At Chocorua everyone was willing to sell a horse, and accordingly the man answered that he "did n't know as he did," but what might James be ready to pay? James replied that he was looking for a horse "for about \$150, but *might* pay \$175." There was a pause before the man spoke: "I've got a horse in my barn that would be just what you want — *for one hundred and seventy five.*"

The buyer was ready enough to laugh over such an incident; but he could not mend his trustful ways. The great thing was to have the fun of poking about the country-side and of talking business, or anything else, with its people whenever occasion offered; and, after all, the horses James bought usually turned out to be sound and serviceable enough. Perhaps it was because he looked at every living creature with a discriminating eye, and had not been a comparative anatomist for nothing. In the end, too, he was suited by any horse that pulled willingly and was safe for man, woman, and child to drive. There were no motor-cars then, and few other summer residents or visitors at Chocorua. James's two-seated "democrat" wagon, full of family and guests, and often followed by a child on the pony and by one or two other riders, used to travel quietly along the secluded and hilly roads for many hours a day.

During this summer, and yearly during the next four, James found real rest and refreshment on his Chocorua farm. The conditions were simple and the place yielded him all the joys of proprietorship without involving him



in responsibilities to cattle and fields. Anyone who knows central New Hampshire will realize how rudimentary "farming" in one of the most barren parts of rocky New England necessarily was. The glacial soil produced nothing naturally except woods and apple trees. But the country was very beautiful, and on his own acres James was lord of part of the Earth. Clearing away bushes and stones from one of the little fields near the house; causing something to be planted which, during those first years, always seemed as if it *must* be responsive enough to grow; cutting out trees to improve the look of the woods or to open an interesting view; dragging stones out of the bathing-hole in the brook; buying a horse or two and a cow on some lonely roadside at the beginning of each summer — these were fascinating adventures.

James was an insatiable lover of landscape, and particularly of wide "views." His inclination was to "open" the view, to cut down obstructing trees, even at the expense of the foreground. In drives and walks about Chocorua he usually made for some high hill that commanded the Ossipee Valley or the peaks of the Sandwich Range and White Mountains. Most hills in the neighborhood were topped by granite ledges and deserted pastures, and each commanded a different prospect. So the expedition often took the form of a picnic on one of these ledges. Axes were taken along; permission was sometimes obtained to cut down any worthless tree that had sprung up to shut off the horizon.

Before the end of such an afternoon James was more than likely to have fallen in love with the spot and to be talking of buying it. Indeed he was forever playing with projects for buying this or that hill-top or high farm and establishing a new dwelling-place of some sort on it. He was usually restrained by the price or by remembering the

housekeeping cares with which his wife was already overburdened. But he actually did buy two — one near Chocorua and one on a shoulder of Mt. Hurricane in the Adirondacks; and about the Chocorua region there is hardly a high-perched pasture which he did not at some time nourish the hope of possessing.

Another consideration that usually deterred him from buying was the difficulty of combining hill-tops with brooks. He used often to bewail this dispensation of nature; for a vacation without a brook or a pond to bathe in was as unthinkable as a summer dwelling-place that did not command a splendid view was "inferior." The little house at Chocorua stood at no great elevation, but it was near the Lake, and the place boasted its own brook, with a little pool, overhung by trees, into which the cold water splashed noisily over a natural dam. Thither, rain or shine, James used to walk across the meadow for an early morning dip; and after a walk or a drive or a couple of hours of chopping, or a warm half-day with a book in the woods, he used to plunge into it again.

A few lines, through which breathes the happiest Chocorua mood, may be added here, although they were written during a later summer.

*To Henry James.*

CHOCORUA, July 10.

. . . I have been up here for ten days reveling in the deliciousness of the country, dressed in a single layer of flannel, shirt, breeches and long stockings, exercising my arms as well as my legs several hours a day, and already feeling that bodily and spiritual freshness that comes of health, and of which no other good on earth is worthy to unlatch the shoe. . . .

The next letter also rejoices over Chocorua, although it turns first to academic amenities. The correspondent addressed, now Sir Charles Walston, and Henry Jackson, both of the English Cambridge, had sent James two cases of audit ale.

*To Charles Waldstein.*

CAMBRIDGE, July 20, 1887.

MY DEAR WALDSTEIN,—It never rains but it pours. The case of beer from *you* also came duly. Day after day I wondered about its *provenance*, but your letter dispels the mystery. I had begun to believe that all the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford were going to vie with each other in wooing my appreciation of their respective brews. The dream is shattered but the reality remains. Five dozen is enough for me to fall back upon — in the immediate present, at all events.

As for that unknown but thrice-blest Jackson, Henry Jackson of Trinity (*dulcissimum mundi nomen*) — is that the way he always acts, or is he only so towards *me*? I thank him from the bottom of my heart, and swear an eternal friendship with him. If ever he is in need of meat, drink, advice or defence, let him henceforth know to whom to apply — purse, house, life, all shall be at his disposal. Such a magnanimous heart as his was ne'er known before.

I wish I knew his *Fach!* But my ignorance is too encyclopedic. He must be a very great philosopher. Goddard shall have some of the stuff. — Of course you mean George Goddard — I know him well.

This has been written in the midst of interruptions. I am back in Cambridge for only a couple of days, to send furniture up to my New Hampshire farmlet. You may play the swell, but I play the yeoman. Which is the better

and more godly life? Surely the latter. The mother earth is in my finger-nails and my back is aching and my skin sweating with the ache and sweat of Father Adam and all his *normal* descendants. No matter! Swells and artists have their place too. Farewell! I am called off again by the furniture. Remember me! And as for the divine Henry Jackson, thank him again and again. His ale is royal stuff. I will make no comparisons between his and yours. Ever affectionately yours,

WM. JAMES.

In explanation of the next letters, it should be said that in 1888 it seemed advisable to get the children into a warmer winter climate than that of Cambridge. Accordingly Mrs. James carried the three ("Harry," "Billy," and "Margaret Mary," aged respectively eight, five, and two years), and a German governess off to Aiken, South Carolina, for three months. James was thus left in the Garden Street house with no other member of the family except — for he counted as one — a small pug-dog named Jap. Dr. Hildreth, who is referred to, was a next-door neighbor, whose children were somewhat older than the James children.

*To his Son Henry (age 8).*

CAMBRIDGE, Mar. 1, 1888.

BELOVED HEINRICH,— You lazy old scoundrel, why don't you write a letter to your old Dad? Tell me how you enjoy your riding on horseback, what Billy does for a living, and which things you like best of all the new kinds of things you have to do with in Aiken. How do you like the darkeys being so numerous? Everything goes on quietly here. The house so still that you can hear a pin drop, and so clean that everything makes a mark on it. All because there are

no brats and kids around. Jap is my only companion, and he sneezes all over me whenever I pick him up. Mrs. Hildreth and the children are gone to Florida. The Emmets seem very happy. I will close with a fable. A donkey felt badly because he was not so great a favorite as a lap-dog. He said, I must act like the lap-dog, and then my mistress will like me. So he came into the house and began to lick his mistress, and put his paws on her, and tried to get into her lap. Instead of kissing him for this, she screamed for the servants, who beat him and put him out of the house. Moral: It's no use to try to be anything but a donkey if you are one. But neither you nor Billy are one.

Good-night! you blessed boy. Stick to your three R's and your riding, so as to get on *fast*. The ancient Persians only taught their boys to ride, to shoot the bow and to tell the truth. Good-night!

Kiss your dear old Mammy and that belly-ache of a Billy, and little Margaret Mary for her Dad. Good-night.

YOUR FATHER.

*To his Son Henry.*

CAMBRIDGE, *Mar.* 27 [1888].

BELOVED HEINRICH,—Your long letter came yesterday P.M. Much the best you ever writ, and the address on the envelope so well written that I wondered whose hand it was, and never thought it might be yours. Your tooth also was a precious memorial — I hope you 'll get a better one in its place. Send me the other as soon as it is tooken out. They ought to go into the Peabody Museum. If any of George Washington's baby-teeth had been kept till now, they would be put somewhere in a public museum for the world to wonder at. I will keep this tooth, so that, if you

grow up to be a second Geo. Washington, I may sell it to a Museum. When Washington was only eight years old his mother did n't know he was going to be Washington. But he did be it, when the time came.

I will now tell you about what Dr. Hildreth is doing. The family is in Florida, and he is building himself a new house. They are just starting the foundation. The fence is taken down between our yard and his, by the stable, and teams are driving through with lumber. Our back yard is filled with lumber for the frame of the house. It is to be cut, squared, mortised, etc., in our yard and then carried through to his.

I dined last night at the Dibbles'. The boys had been to dancing-school. I like their looks. All the boys and girls together kept up such a talking that I seemed to be in a boiler factory where they bang the iron with the hammers so. It's just so with them every day. But they're very good-natured, even if they don't let the old ones speak.

Say to Fräulein that "ich lasse Sie grüssen von Herzensgrund!"<sup>1</sup>

Thump Bill for me and ask him if he likes it so nicely.

Jap's nose is all dry and brown with holding it so everlastingly towards the fire.

We are having ice-cream and the Rev. George A. Gordon to lunch today. The ice-cream is left over from the Philosophical Club last night.

Now pray, old Harry, stick to your books and let me see you do sums and read *fast* when you get back.

The best of all of us is your mother, though.

Good-bye!

Your loving Dad.

W. J.

<sup>1</sup>I send her heartiest greetings.

*To his Son William.*

18 GARDEN STREET, *Apr.* 29, 1888.

9:30 A.M.

BELOVED WILLIAMSON,— This is Sunday, the sabbath of the Lord, and it has been very hot for two days. I think of you and Harry with such longing, and of that infant whom I know so little, that I cannot help writing you some words. Your Mammy writes me that she can't get *you* to *work* much, though Harry works. You *must* work a little this summer in our own place. How nice it will be! I have wished that both you and Harry were by my side in some amusements which I have had lately. First, the learned seals in a big tank of water in Boston. The loveliest beasts, with big black eyes, poking their heads up and down in the water, and then scrambling out on their bellies like boys tied up in bags. They play the guitar and banjo and organ, and one of them saves the life of a child who tumbles in the water, catching him by the collar with its teeth, and swimming him ashore. They are both, child and seal, trained to do it. When they have done well, their master gives them a lot of fish. They eat an awful lot, scales, and fins, and bones and all, without chewing. That is the worst thing about them. He says he never beats them. They are full of curiosity — more so than a dog for far-off things; for when a man went round the room with a pole pulling down the windows at the top, all their heads bobbed out of the water and followed him about with their eyes *aus lauter*<sup>1</sup> curiosity. Dogs would hardly have noticed him, I think. Now, speaking of dogs, Jap was *nauseated* two days ago. I thought, from his licking his nose, that he was going to be sick, and got him out of doors just in time. He vomited most awfully on the grass. He then acted as if he thought I was going to

<sup>1</sup> From pure.

punish him, poor thing. He can't discriminate between sickness and sin. He leads a dull life, without you and Margaret Mary. I tell him if it lasts much longer, he'll grow into a common beast; he hates to be a beast, but unless he has human companionship, he will sink to the level of one. So you must hasten back and make much of him.

I also went to the panorama of the battle of Bunker Hill, which is as good as that of Gettysburg. I wished Harry had been there, because he knows the story of it. You and he shall go soon after your return. It makes you feel just as if you lived there.

Well, I will now stop. On Monday morning the 14th or Sunday night the 13th of May, I will take you into my arms; that is, I will meet you with a carriage on the wharf, when the boat comes in. And I tell you I shall be glad to see the whole lot of you come roaring home. Give my love to your Mammy, to Aunt Margaret, to Fräulein, to Harry, to Margaret Mary, and to yourself. Your loving Dad,

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry James.*

CHOCORUA, N.H., July 11, 1888.

MY DEAR HARRY,—Your note announcing Edmund Gurney's death came yesterday, and was a most shocking surprise. It seems one of Death's stupidest strokes, for I know of no one whose life-task was begun on a more far-reaching scale, or from whom one expected with greater certainty richer fruit in the ripeness of time. I pity his lovely wife, to whom I wrote a note yesterday; and also a brief notice for the "Nation."<sup>1</sup> To me it will be a cruel

<sup>1</sup> If it was printed, this notice has escaped identification.



loss; for he recognized me more than anyone, and in all my thoughts of returning to England he was the Englishman from whom I awaited the most nourishing communion. We ran along on very similar lines of interest. He was very profound, subtle, and voluminous, and bound for an intellectual synthesis of things much solider and completer than anyone I know, except perhaps Royce. Well! such is life! all these deaths make what remains here seem strangely insignificant and ephemeral, as if the weight of things, as well as the numbers, was all on the other side.<sup>1</sup>

I have to thank you for a previous letter three or four weeks old, which, having sent to Aunt Kate, I cannot now date. I must also thank for "Partial Portraits" and "The Reverberator." The former, I of course knew (except the peculiarly happy Woolson one), but have read several of 'em again with keen pleasure, especially the Turguenieff. "The Reverberator" is masterly and exquisite. I quite squealed through it, and all the household has amazingly enjoyed it. It shows the technical ease you have attained, that you can handle so delicate and difficult a fancy so lightly. It is simply delicious. I hope your other magazine things, which I am following your advice and not reading [in magazine form], are only half as good. How you can keep up such a productivity and live, I don't see. All your time is your own, however, barring dinner-parties, and that makes a great difference.

Most of my time seems to disappear in college duties, not to speak of domestic interruptions. Our summer starts promisingly. How with my lazy temperament I managed

<sup>1</sup> "How I shall miss that man's presence in the world! . . . Our problems were the same and for the most part our solutions."

"He is a terrible loss to me. I did n't know till the news came how much I mentally referred to him as a critic and sympathizer, or how much I counted on seeing more of him hereafter." (From letters to G. Croom Robertson.)

*Vide, also, The Will to Believe, etc., pp. 306-7.*

to start all the things we put through last summer, now makes me wonder. The place has yet a good deal to be done with it, but it can be taken slowly, and Alice is a most *vaillante* partner. We have a trump of a hired man. . . . Some day I'll send you a photograph of the little place. Please send this to Alice, for whose letters I'm duly grateful. I only hope she'll keep decently well for a little while. Yours ever,

W. J.

P.S. I have just been downstairs to get an envelope, and there on the lawn saw a part of the family which I will describe, for you to insert in one of your novels as a picture of domestic happiness. On the newly made lawn in the angle of the house and kitchen ell, in the shadow of the hot afternoon sun, lies a mattress taken out of our spare-room for an airing against Richard Hodgson's arrival tomorrow. On it the madonna and child — the former sewing in a nice blue point dress, and smiling at the latter (named Peggy), immensely big and fat for her years, and who, with quite a vocabulary of adjectives, proper names, and a mouthful of teeth, shows as yet, although in her sixteenth month, no disposition to walk. She is rolling and prattling to herself, now on mattress and now on grass, and is an exceedingly good-natured, happy, and intelligent child. It conduces to her happiness to have a hard cracker in her fist, at which she mumbles more or less all day, and of which she is never known to let go, even taking it into her bath with her and holding it immersed till that ceremony is o'er. A man is papering and painting one of our parlors, a carpenter putting up a mantelpiece in another. Margaret and Harry's tutor are off on the backs of the two horses to the village seven miles off, to have 'em shod. I, with naught on but gray flannel shirt, breeches, belt, stockings

and shoes, shall now proceed across the Lake in the boat and up the hill, to get and carry the mail. Harry will probably ride along the shore on the pony which Aunt Kate has given him, and where Billy and Fräulein are, Heaven only knows. Returning, I shall have a bath either in lake or brook — does n't it sound nice? On the whole it is nice, but very hot.

*To Miss Grace Norton.*

[Post-card]

[CHOCORUA,] Aug. 12, 1888.

It would take G[uy] de M[aupassant] himself to just fill a post-card chock-full and yet leave naught to be desired, with an account of "Pierre et Jean." It is a little cube of bronze; or like the body of the Capitaine Beausire, "plein comme un oeuf, dur comme une balle" — dur surtout! Fifteen years ago, I might have been *enthused* by such art; but I'm growing weak-minded, and the charm of this admirable precision and adequacy of art to subject leaves me too cold. It is like these modern tools and instruments, so admirably compact, and strong, and reduced to their fighting weight. One of those little metallic pumps, *e.g.*, so oily and powerful, with a handle about two feet long, which will throw a column of water about four inches thick 100 feet. Unfortunately, G. de M.'s pump only throws dirty water — and I am *beginning* to be old foggy eno' to like even an old shackly wooden pump-handle, if the water it fetches only carries all the sweetness of the mountain-side. Yrs. ever,

W. J.

The dying fish on p[lin]s stick most in my memory. Is that right in a novel of human life?

*To G. Croom Robertson.*

Oct. 7, 1888.

. . . I am teaching ethics and the philosophy of religion for the first time, with that dear old duffer Martineau's works as a text. It gives me lots to do, as I only began my systematic reading in that line three weeks ago, having wasted the summer in farming (if such it can be called) and philosophizing. My "Psychology" will therefore have to be postponed until another year; for with as much college work as I have this year, I can't expect to write a line of it. . . .

*To Henry James.*

Oct. 14, 1888.

. . . The Cambridge year begins with much vehemence — I with a big class in ethics, and seven graduates from other colleges in advanced psychology, giving me a good deal of work. But I feel uncommonly hearty, and shall no doubt come out of it all in good shape. . . . I am to have lots of reading and no writing to speak of this year and expect to enjoy it hugely. It does one good to read classic books. For a month past I've done nothing else, in behalf of my ethics class — Plato, Aristotle, Adam Smith, Butler, Paley, Spinoza, etc., etc. No book is celebrated without deserving it for some quality, and recenter books, certain never to be celebrated, have an awfully squashy texture. . . .

*To E. L. Godkin.*

CAMBRIDGE, Apr. 15, 1889.

MY DEAR GODKIN,—Harry's address is 34 De Vere Gardens, W. I imagine that he will be there till midsummer.

I hope 't is yourself that's going! You must need it

awfully. I fully meant to call on you when I was in N. Y. a fortnight ago. But I was so dead tired that I slept on my hotel bed all the only afternoon I had, went to Daly's theatre in the evening and then had to come away. You are the noblest Roman of them all; and what a man shall do for a newspaper with sanity, intellect and backbone in it, when your editorial pen has ceased to trickle, I don't know. There must be plenty of morals in the world, plenty of brains, plenty of education, plenty of literary skill, but was there ever a time or country when they seemed less to coalesce, in the field of journalism? In the earlier years I may say that my whole political education was due to the "Nation"; later came a time when I thought you looked on the doings of Terence Powderly and Co. too much from without and too little from within; now I turn to you again as my only solace in a world where nothing stands straight. You have the most curious way of always being *right*, so I never dare to trust myself now when you're agin me. I read my "Nation" rather quicker than I used, but I depend on it perhaps more than ever, and cannot forbear seizing this passing occasion to tell you so.

I hope, once more, that you're going abroad yourself. It will do you no end of good to *take in* after your daily giving out for so long. Harry will be delighted to see you. Poor Alice is stranded at Leamington, unable to use her legs or brain to any account, but never complaining, and living apparently on the Irish question, being a violent Parnellite. I settle the affairs of the Universe in my College courses, and have got so far ahead as to be building a big new house on that part of it known as the Norton estate.<sup>1</sup> A new street passes before your old house, now Grace Norton's. I am a little north of it, facing it, and squatting right across the old Norton Avenue. Four other houses are

<sup>1</sup> *Vide*, pp. 290-91 *infra*.

going up there immediately, two of 'em actually under way.

No answer to this is expected, from a man as busy as you. Please give my best respects to Mrs. Godkin, and believe me ever affectionately yours,

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry James.*

CAMBRIDGE, May 12, 1889.

MY DEAR HARRY,— I have been feeling so dead-tired all this spring that I believe a long break from my usual scenes is necessary. It is like the fagged state that drove me abroad the last two times. I have been pretty steadily busy for six years and the result is n't wonderful, considering what a miserable nervous system I have anyhow. The upshot of it is that I have pretty much made up my mind to invest \$1000 (if necessary) of Aunt Kate's legacy in my constitution, and spend the summer abroad. This will give me the long-wished opportunity of seeing you and Alice, and enable me to go to an international congress of "physiological psychologists" which I have had the honor of an invitation to attend in the capacity of "honorary committee"-man for the U. S. It will be instructive and inspiring, no doubt, and won't last long, and [will] give me an opportunity to meet a number of eminent men. But for these three reasons, I think I should start for the Pacific coast as being more novel. I confess I find myself caring more for landscapes than for men — strange to say, and doubtless shameful; so my stay in London will probably be short.

I learn from Godkin that he is to be with you about the same time that I shall be in London. I don't suppose you have room for both of us, but pray don't let that trouble you. I can easily find a lodging somewhere for a few days, which are all that I shall stay. I am heartily glad Godkin is about to go abroad; I know of no one who so richly de-

serves a vacation. My heart is warming up again to the "Nation," as it has n't for many years.

I long to have a good long talk with you about yourself, Alice, and 10,000 old things. Alice used to be so perturbed at *expecting* things that in my ignorance of her present condition I don't venture to announce to her my arrival. But do you use your discretion as to where and how she shall be informed. Send her this, if it is the best way.

It's a bad summer for me to be gone, with the house-building here, the Chocorua place unfinished, and the crowds set in motion by the Paris exhibition; and *perhaps*, if I find myself unexpectedly hearty when lectures end two weeks hence, I may not go after all. But I can't help feeling in my bones that I *ought* to go, so I probably shall. It will then be the Cephalonia, sailing June 22, and I shall get off at Queenstown, as I am on the whole more curious to see the Emerald Isle than any other part of Europe, except Scotland, which I probably shan't see at all. The "Congress" in Paris begins Aug. 5.

How good it will be to see poor Alice again, and to hear you discourse! Ever affectly, yours,

W. J.

In late June James did, in fact, sail on the Cephalonia and disembark at Queenstown. Thence he proceeded *via* Cork to Killarney and on to Dublin, where he spent a day at Trinity College before going to Glasgow and Oban. Having, in the briefest time and at first sight, fallen "dead in love wi' Scotland both land and people" he traveled on *via* Edinburgh, and reached London by the 17th of July. There he stayed with Henry James for ten days and saw his sister. A letter from London to Mrs. James may be included in part.

To Mrs. James.

34 DE VERE GARDENS, LONDON,  
July 29, 1889.

. . . [After seeing Mrs. Gurney I went] to Brighton, where I spent a night at Myers's lodgings, and the evening with him and the Sidgwicks trying thought-transference experiments which, however, on that occasion did not succeed. . . . The best thing by far which I saw in Brighton, and a thing the impression of which will perhaps outlast everything else on this trip, was four cuttle-fish (octopus) in the Aquarium. I wish we had one of them for a child — such flexible intensity of life in a form so inaccessible to our sympathy. Next day to Haslemere to the Pearsall Smiths, where I spent a really *gemüthlich* evening and morning. Pearsall himself as engaging as of yore. The place and country wonderfully rich and beautiful. Returning yesterday, went with H. to National Gallery in the afternoon, and read Brownell on France in the P.M. Yesterday, Sunday, Harry went to the country after breakfast, whilst I wrote a lot of notes and read Zola's "Germinal," a story of mines and miners, and a truly magnificent work, if successfully to reproduce the horror and pity of certain human facts and make you see them as if real can make a book magnificent.

Towards four o'clock (the weather fine) I mounted the top of a bus and went (with thousands of others similarly enthroned) to Hampton Court, through Kew, Richmond, Bushey Park, etc.; about 30 miles there and back, all for 4s. 6d. I strolled for an hour or more in the Hampton Court Gardens, and overlooked the Thames all *bizarrée* with row-boats and male and female rowers, and got back, *perdu dans la foule*, at 10 P.M. — a most delightful and interesting six hours, with but the usual drawback, that



*you* were not along. How you would have enjoyed every bit of it, especially the glimpses, between Richmond and Hampton, over the high brick walls and between the bars of the iron gates, of these extraordinary English gardens and larger grounds, all black with their tufted vegetation. More different things can grow in a square foot here, if they're taken care of, than I've ever seen elsewhere, and one of these high ivy-walled gardens is something the *like* of which is altogether unknown to us. Like all human things (except wives) they grow banal enough, if one stays long in their company, but the first acquaintance between Alice Gibbens and them is something which I would fain see. The crowd was immense and the picturesqueness of everything quite medieval, as were also the good manners and the tendency to a certain hearty sociability, shown in the chaffing from vehicle to vehicle along the road. I'm glad I had this sight of the greatness of the English people, and glad I had no social duties to perform. . . .

Harry is as nice and simple and amiable as he can be. He has covered himself, like some marine crustacean, with all sorts of material growths, rich sea-weeds and rigid barnacles and things, and lives hidden in the midst of his strange heavy alien manners and customs; but these are all but "protective resemblances," under which the same dear old, good, innocent and at bottom very powerless-feeling Harry remains, caring for little but his writing, and full of dutifulness and affection for all gentle things. . . .

From London James crossed to Paris, to attend the International Congress of Physiological Psychology which had been arranged to coincide with the International Exposition of that year. He found between 60 and 120 colleagues, most of them European, of course, in attendance

at its sessions. This incident in his life may be summarized in a few sentences from his own report of the Congress, in "Mind": "The most striking feature of the discussions was, perhaps, their tendency to slope off to some one or other of those shady horizons with which the name of "psychic-research" is now associated. . . . The open results were, however (as always happens at such gatherings), secondary in real importance to the latent ones — the friendships made, the intimacies deepened, and the encouragement and inspiration which came to everyone from seeing before them in flesh and blood so large a portion of that little army of fellow students from whom and for whom all contemporary psychology exists. The individual worker feels much less isolated in the world after such an experience." To Stumpf he wrote similarly (Aug. 15): "The sight of 120 men all actively interested in psychology has made me feel much less lonely in the world, and ready to finish my book this year with a great deal more *entrain*. A book hanging so long on one's hands at last gets outgrown, and even disgusting to one."

On his way home James went again to see his sister, and her account of him is not to be omitted.

"William, instead of going to Switzerland, came suddenly back from Paris and went home, having, as usual, exhausted Europe in a few weeks, finding it stale, flat and unprofitable. The only necessity being to get home, the first letter after his arrival, was, of course, full of plans for his return *plus* wife and infants; he is just like a blob of mercury — you can't put a mental finger upon him. H. and I were laughing over him, and recalling Father, and William's resemblance (in his ways) to him. Tho' the results are the same, they seem to come from such a different nature in the two; in W., an entire inability or indifference

to 'stick to a thing for the sake of sticking,' as some one said of him once; whilst Father, the delicious infant! could n't submit even to the thralldom of his own whim; and then the dear being was such a prey to the demon homesickness. . . . But to return to our mutton, William: he came with H. on August 14 on his way to Liverpool. He told all about his Paris experience, where he was a delegate to the Psychological Congress, which was a most brilliant success. The French most polite and hospitable. They invited W. to open the Congress, and they always had a foreigner in the Chair at the different meetings. I extracted with great difficulty from him that 'Monsieur Willyam James' was frequently referred to by the speakers. He liked the Henry Sidgwicks and Fred. Myers. Mrs. Myers paid him the following enigmatic compliment: 'We are so glad that you are *as* you are.'"

On getting back to Cambridge in the autumn, James moved his family into a house which he had just built in Irving Street — a street which had been newly opened through what used to be called Norton's Woods. He had planned this house with such eager interest in all its details that he had even designed doors and windows and had practically been his own architect with respect to everything except structural specifications. The result was a detached wooden house of pleasantly square outer appearance, covered with shingles which soon weathered brown, and having dark green trimmings. Inside there was one room which deserves particular mention. James loved to have "space" about him<sup>1</sup> and he planned a library that

<sup>1</sup> "I write every morning at one of the card tables in the parlor, all alone in a room 120 feet long — just about the right size for one man." (Letter from the Hotel Del Monte, Sept. 8, 1898.)



Francis James Child.

Caricature from a Pocket Note-Book.



was the largest and sunniest room the house could provide. It was about  $22\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide and 27 feet long. The walls were lined with book-shelves from floor to ceiling, except where James hung a portrait of his father over the open fireplace. On the southern side there was a triple window whose total width was nearly half the length of the room, and which let in a flood of sunlight. Through it one looked out upon a small lawn overhung by a large elm, and upon more grass and trees beyond. This was his study and living-room for the rest of his life. Here most of the Cambridge letters that follow may be assumed to have been written.

After James moved to 95 Irving Street, several people referred to in the letters became his very near neighbors. Josiah Royce, Francis J. Child, C. E. Norton, Miss Theodora Sedgwick were all within three minutes walk of his door. Miss Grace Norton lived across the way.

*To Miss Grace Norton.*

CAMBRIDGE, Dec. 25, 1889.

DEAR MISS NORTON,— Will you accept, as a Christmas offering, the accompanying bottles of California Champagne, *extremely* salubrious in its after-effects, quite as intoxicating, almost as good-tasting and only half as “cost-playful” as French Champagne — in short, a beverage which no household should be without.

I should gladly have sought out something more sentimental,— though after a bottle or so, this seems rosy with sentiment,— but I have no gifts of invention in the *present* line, and took something useful, merely to testify to the affection and admiration with which I am ever yours,

WM. JAMES.

*To Charles Eliot Norton.*

Undated [1889].

MY DEAR MR. NORTON,— This introduces to you Mr. X —, from South Abington, a workman in a tack factory since boyhood, who has nevertheless gone quite deeply into studies philosophic, mathematical and sociological. He will tell you more about himself, and I wish if convenient that you would “draw him out” — I should like much to hear your impression. I want, if possible, to help him to a start in life here. Palmer has invited him to stay with him for a week. And we are busy studying him and trying to cast his horoscope, to feel whether we can conscientiously recommend him to some millionaire to support in college for a year (as unmatriculated), and so give him a chance to make himself known and find some better avocation for himself than the making of tacks ten hours a day. He knows nothing of our plan, thinks this a mere spree, so please don’t let it out! Very truly yours,

WM. JAMES.

The workman from the tack factory, like more than one other lame duck before and after him, had aroused what Professor Palmer once aptly called James’s “inclination toward the under-dog and his insistence on keeping the door open for every species of human experiment.” It made no difference what X—’s doctrines were, or whether or not they were akin to James’s way of thinking. And if such a man was unfitted to arouse other people’s sympathies, James’s own were the more readily challenged. The erratics of the philosophical world were significant phenomena, and sometimes interested him most just when they were most “queer” — when they were perhaps aberrant to the point of being pathological specimens. It

mattered as little to James where such people sprang from, or by what strange processes they had arrived at their ideas, as it matters to a naturalist that beetles have to be hunted for in all sorts of places. He filled the "Varieties of Religious Experience" with the records of abnormal cases and with accounts of the mental and emotional adventures of people whom the everyday world called cranks and fanatics. He was not only curious about such men, but endlessly patient and helpful to them. To some indeed his encouragement was more comforting than profitable, and among them must be numbered the X — of this letter — an uncouth and helpless creature, who has since achieved his only immortality in another sphere of being. The poor man never got over this "spree," but withdrew from the tack factory forever, spent many years in a Mills Hotel working over an unsalable *magnum opus*, and every now and then appealing for funds. A letter on a later page recurs to this case.

In the spring of 1890 James finished the remaining chapters of the "Psychology." The next letters were written during the final weeks of work on the book.

*To Henry Holt.*

CAMBRIDGE, May 9, 1890.

MY DEAR HOLT,— I was in hopes that you would propose to break away from the famous "Series" and publish the book independently, in two volumes. An abridgement could then be prepared for the Series. If there be anything which I loathe it is a mean overgrown page in small type, and I think the author's feelings ought to go for a good deal in the case of the enormous *rat* which his ten years gestation has brought forth.



In any event, I dread the summer and next year, with two new courses to teach, and, I fear, no vacation. What I wrote you, if you remember, was to send you the "heft" of the MS. by May 1st, the rest to be done in the intervals of proof-correcting. You however insisted on having the entire MS. in your hands before anything should be done. It seems to me that this delay is, *now* at any rate, absurd. There is certainly less than two weeks' work on the MS. undone. And every day got behind us now means a day of travel and vacation for me next September. I really think, considering the sort of risk I am running by the delay, that I must *insist* on getting to press now as soon as the page is decided on.

No one could be more disgusted than I at the sight of the book. *No* subject is worth being treated of in 1000 pages! Had I ten years more, I could rewrite it in 500; but as it stands it is this or nothing — a loathsome, distended, tumefied, bloated, dropsical mass, testifying to nothing but two facts: *1st*, that there is no such thing as a *science* of psychology, and *2nd*, that W. J. is an incapable.

Yours provided you hurry up things,

WM. JAMES.

When Mrs. James took the children to Chocorua for the summer, James remained in Cambridge to finish the book.

*To Mrs. James.*

CAMBRIDGE, May 17, 7:50 P.M.

. . . Wrote hard pretty much all day, lectured on Ansel Bourne, etc., had three students to lunch, Chubb being gone to Milton. Visit this A.M. from Bishop Keane of the New Catholic University at Washington, to get advice about psycho-physic laboratory. Feel very well, though I

drink coffee daily. "Psychology" will certainly be finished by Sunday noon! . . .

*Sunday, May [18], 9:50 P.M.*

. . . The job is done! All but some paging and half a dozen little footnotes, the work is completed, and as I see it as a unit, I feel as if it might be rather a vigorous and richly colored chunk — for that kind of thing at least! . . .

*May 22, 5:45 P.M.*

. . . I sot up till two last night putting the finishing touches on the MS., which now goes to Holt in irreproachable shape, woodcuts and all. I insured it for \$1000.00 in giving it to the express people this A.M. That will make them extra careful at a cost of \$1.50. This morning a great feeling of weariness came over me at 10 o'clock, and I was taking down a volume of Tennyson intending to doze off in my chair, when X—— arrived. . . .

*May 24.*

. . . I came home very weary, and lit a fire, and had a delicious two hours all by myself, thinking of the big *étape* of my life which now lay behind me (I mean that infernal book done), and of the possibilities that the future yielded of reading and living and loving out from the shadow of that interminable black cloud. . . . At any rate, it does give me some comfort to think that I don't live *wholly* in projects, aspirations and phrases, but now and then have something done to show for all the fuss. The joke of it is that I, who have always considered myself a thing of glimpses, of discontinuity, of *aperçus*, with no power of doing a big job, suddenly realize at the *end* of this task that it is the biggest book on psychology in any language except Wundt's, Rosmini's and Daniel Greenleaf Thompson's! Still, if it burns up at the printing-office, I shan't much care, for I shan't ever write it again!!

*To Henry James.*

CHOCORUA, *June 4, 1890.*

MY DEAR HARRY, . . . The great event for me is the completion at last of my tedious book. I have been at my desk with it every day since I got back from Europe, and up at four in the morning with it for many a day of the last month. I have written every page four or five times over, and carried it "on my mind" for nine years past, so you may imagine the relief. Besides, I am glad to appear at last as a man who has done something more than make phrases and projects. I will send you a copy, in the fall, I trust, though [the printer] is so inert about starting the proofs that we may not get through till midwinter or later. As "Psychologies" go, it is a good one, but psychology is in such an ante-scientific condition that the whole present generation of them is predestined to become unreadable old medieval lumber, as soon as the first genuine tracks of insight are made. The sooner the better, for me! . . .

*To Mrs. Henry Whitman.*

CAMBRIDGE, *July 24, 1890.*

MY DEAR MRS. WHITMAN,— How good a way to begin the day, with a letter from you, and a composition of yours to correct!

To take the latter first, I trembled a little when, after looking over the printed document, I found you beginning so sympathetically to stroke down Mr. Jay; but you made it all right ere the end. Since the movement is on foot, it is time that rational people like yourself should get an influence in it. I doubt whether the earth supports a more genuine enemy of all that the Catholic Church *inwardly* stands for than I do — *écrasez l'infâme* is the only

way I can feel about it. But the concrete Catholics, including the common priests in this country, are an entirely different matter. Their wish to educate their own, and to do what proselytizing they can, is natural enough; so is their wish to get state money. "Destroying American institutions" is a widely different matter; and instead of this vague phrase, I should like to hear one specification laid down of an "institution" which they are now threatening. The only way to resist them is absolute firmness and impartiality, and continuing in the line which you point out, bless your 'art! Down with demagogism! — this document is not quite free therefrom. . . .

As for the style, I see in it nothing but what is admirable. A pedant might object (near the end) to a *drop* of (even Huguenot) blood *beating high*; but how can I object to anything from your pen?

And now 10,000 thanks for your kind words about the proofs. The pages I sent you are probably the most *continuously* amusing in the book — though occasionally there is a passing gleam elsewhere. If there is aught of good in the style, it is the result of ceaseless toil in rewriting. Everything comes out wrong with me at first; but when once objectified in a crude shape, I can torture and poke and scrape and pat it till it offends me no more. I take you at your word and send you some more sheets — only, to get something pithy and real, I go back to some practical remarks at the end of a chapter on Habit, composed with a view of benefiting the *young*. May they accordingly be an inspiration to *you*!

Most of the book is altogether unreadable from any human point of view, as I feel only too well in my deluge of proofs. My dear wife will come down next week (I

think) to help me through. Thank you once more, and believe me, with warm regards to your husband, Yours always,

WM. JAMES.

*To W. D. Howells.*

CHOCORUA, Aug. 20, 1890.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,— You 've done it this time and no mistake! I 've had a little leisure for reading this summer, and have just read, first your "Shadow of a Dream," and next your "Hazard of New Fortunes," and can hardly recollect a novel that has taken hold of me like the latter. Some compensations go with being a mature man, do they not? You could n't possibly have done so solid a piece of work as that ten years ago, could you? The steady unflagging flow of it is something wonderful. Never a weak note, the number of characters, each intensely individual, the observation of detail, the everlasting wit and humor, and beneath all the bass accompaniment of the human problem, the entire Americanness of it, all make it a very great book, and one which will last when we shall have melted into the infinite azure. Ah! my dear Howells, it 's worth something to be able to write such a book, and it is so peculiarly *yours* too, flavored with your idiosyncrasy. (The book is so d — d humane!) Congratulate your wife on having brought up such a husband. My wife had been raving about it ever since it came out, but I could n't read it till I got the larger printed copy, and naturally could n't credit all she said. But it makes one love as well as admire you, and so o'er-shadows the equally exquisite, though slighter "Shadow of a Dream," that I have no adjectives left for that. I hope the summer is speeding well with all of you. I have been in Cambridge six weeks and corrected

1400 pages of proof. The year which shall have witnessed the apparition of your "Hazard of New Fortunes," of Harry's "Tragic Muse," and of *my* "Psychology" will indeed be a memorable one in American Literature!! Believe me, with warm regards to Mrs. Howells, yours ever affectionately,

WM. JAMES.

The "Principles of Psychology" appeared in the early autumn.

## X

1890-1893

### *The "Briefer Course" and the Laboratory — A Sabbatical Year in Europe*

THE publication of the "Principles" may be treated as making a date — at any rate in the story of James's life. Although conceived originally as a manual or textbook, it had gone far beyond that mere summary of a subject which it is the rôle of most textbooks to be, and had finally assumed the form of a philosophic survey. "It was a declaration of independence (defining the boundary lines of a new science with unapproachable genius.)"<sup>1</sup> In the scientific world it established James's already high reputation and greatly extended his influence.

Beyond scientific circles the book's style, its colloquial directness, its humor, and its moral depth and appeal, won it an instantaneous popularity. Even before it appeared, the compositor at the printing-press was reported as so enthralled by his "copy" that he was reading the manuscript out of hours. Passages, among which the chapter on Habit is the most widely known, "went home" with the force of eloquent sermons. "I can't tell you what the book has *meant* to me." Such was the burden of countless messages that began to come in from non-professional readers. During the course of the first winter after its appearance, it became clear that the only obstacle to its almost universal use in American colleges was its size. And so James spent the summer of 1891 in making an abridgment which ap-

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Cattell. Address upon the 25th Anniversary of the American Psychological Association, Dec. 1916. *Science* (N. S.), vol. XLV, p. 276.

peared that autumn under the title "Briefer Course." In one form or the other, either in the two-volume edition or the one-volume abridgment,—either in "James" or in "Jimmy," as the two books were soon nicknamed,—James's "Psychology" was soon in use in most of the colleges. During the thirty years that have passed since then, the majority of the English-speaking students who have entered the field of psychology have entered by the door which James's pages threw wide to them.

But by this time the inclination of James's own mind was more and more strongly toward philosophy, and the experimental laboratory was becoming a burden to him. It is true that the laboratory with which he had thus far done his own work would not nowadays be reckoned as at all a big affair. But owing to advances which had been made in the science during the previous ten years, an enlarged laboratory was a necessity for further progress and for right teaching. It would then require more time and attention from its director; James wished to give less time than heretofore. "I naturally hate experimental work," he said, "and all my circumstances conspired (during the important years of my life) to prevent me from getting into a routine of it, so that now it is always the duty that gets postponed. There are plenty of others, to keep my time as fully employed as my working powers permit."<sup>1</sup> There appeared to be one solution for the difficulty, and in 1892 he set about to arrange it. He raised enough money to establish the Harvard Laboratory on such a basis that an able experimenter could be invited to make its direction his chief concern. He recommended the appointment of Hugo Münsterberg to take charge for three years. He had been much impressed by the originality and promise implied by some

<sup>1</sup>To Hugo Münsterberg, Aug. 22, 1890.



experimental work which Münsterberg had already done at Freiburg, and his conviction — in respect to all academic appointments — was that youth and originality should be sought rather than “safety”; that the way to organize a strong philosophical department was to get men of different schools into its faculty, and that they should expound dissimilar rather than harmonious points of view and doctrines.

When this appointment had been made, James saw his way clear to taking the sabbatical year of absence from college duties to which he was already more than entitled. For nine years he had allowed himself only the briefest interruptions of work, and by 1892 he was in a badly fatigued condition. He sailed for Antwerp in May, and took his family with him. He had no more definite purpose than to escape all literary and academic obligations and “lie fallow” in Europe for the next fifteen months. Letters will show that he accomplished this with fair success.

Meanwhile, those which immediately follow were written from Cambridge. The first of them was to a Boston neighbor and correspondent, one letter to whom has already been given and to whom there will be a number more. Sarah Whitman, who had lived in Baltimore before her marriage to Henry Whitman of Boston made her a resident of that city and of Beverly, was a person to whose charm and talents and taste it would be impossible to do justice here. She was a lover of every art, and worked, herself, at painting, and with more success and great distinction in stained glass. Eager and generous of spirit, she was constantly confided in and consulted by a small host of friends. She was, in an eminent degree, one of those happy mortals who possess a native gift for friendship and hospitality. At the date of the next letter she was, for a season, in England.

*To Mrs. Henry Whitman.*

CAMBRIDGE, Oct. 15, 1890.

MY DEAR MRS. WHITMAN,— It does me good to hear from you, and to come in contact with the spirit with which you “chuck” yourself at life. It is medicinal in a way which it would probably both surprise and please you to know, and helps to make me ashamed of those pusillanimities and self-contempts which are the bane of my temperament and against which I have to carry on my lifelong struggle. Enough! As for you, beat Sargent, play round Chamberlain, extract the goodness and wisdom of Bryce, absorb the autumn colors of the land and sea, mix the crimson and the opal fire in the glass, charm everyone you come in contact with by your humanity and amiability; in short, *continue*, and we shall have plenty to talk about at the next (but for that, tedious) dinner at which it may be my blessing to be placed by your side! Also enough!

You will probably ere long be receiving the stalwart [Henry M.] Stanley and his accomplished bride. I am reading with great delight his book. How delicious is the fact that you can't cram individuals under cut and dried heads of classification. Stanley is a genius all to himself, and on the whole I like him right well, with his indescribable mixture of the battering ram and the orator, of hardness and sentiment, egotism and justice, domineeringness and democratic feeling, callousness to others' insides, yet kindness, and all his other odd contradictions. He is probably on the whole an innocent. At any rate, it does me a lot of good to read about his heroic adventures.

As for “detail,” of which you write, it is the ever-mounting sea which is certain to engulf one, soul and body. You have a genius to cope with it.— But again, enough!

Naturally I “purr” like your cat at the handsome words

you let fall about the "Psychology." Go on! But remember that you can do so just as well without reading it: I shan't know the difference. Seriously, your determination to read that fatal book is the one flaw in an otherwise noble nature. I wish that I had never written it.

I hope to get my wife and the rest of the family down from New Hampshire this week, though it does seem a sin to abandon the feast of light, color, and purity, for the turbid town.

Good-night! Yours faithfully,

WM. JAMES.

James was now beginning to prepare the condensed edition of the "Principles of Psychology," which appeared the next year as the "Briefer Course."

Professor Howison, who was informed of the project, had uttered a protest against the irreverent irony with which James treated the Hegelian dialectics in the "Principles,"<sup>1</sup> and had expressed a hope that such passages would be omitted from the Briefer Course.

*To G. H. Howison.*

CAMBRIDGE, Jan. 20, 1891.

MY POOR DEAR DARLING HOWISON,—Your letter is received and wrings my heart with its friendliness and

<sup>1</sup> *E.g., Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, p. 369. "One is almost tempted to believe that the pantomime state of mind and that of the Hegelian dialectics are, emotionally considered, one and the same thing. In the pantomime all common things are represented to happen in impossible ways, people jump down each other's throats, houses turn inside out, old women become young men, everything 'passes into its opposite' with inconceivable celerity and skill; and this, so far from producing perplexity, brings rapture to the beholder's mind. And so, in the Hegelian logic, relations elsewhere recognized under the insipid name of distinctions (such as that between knower and object, many and one) must first be translated into impossibilities and contradictions, then 'transcended' and identified by miracles, ere the proper temper is induced for thoroughly enjoying the spectacle they show."

animosity combined. But don't think me more frivolous than I am. "Those bagatelle diatribes about Hegelism," etc., are not reprinted in this book, not a single syllable of them! I make some jokes about Caird on a certain page, but Caird already forgives me, and writes that I am sophisticated by Hegel myself. If you carefully ponder the *note* on that same page or the next one (Volume I, page 370), you will see the real inwardness of my whole feeling about the matter. I am not as low as I seem, and some day (D. v.) may get out another and a more "metaphysical" book, which will steal all your Hegelian thunder except the dialectical method, and show me to be a true child of the gospel. Heartily and everlastingly yours,

WM. JAMES.

To F. W. H. Myers.

NEWPORT, R.I., Jan. 30, 1891.

MY DEAR MYERS,— Your letter of the 12th came duly, but not till now have I had leisure to write you a line of reply. Verily you are the stuff of which world-changers are made! What a despot for Psychical Research! I always feel guilty in your presence, and am, on the whole, glad that the broad blue ocean rolls between us for most of the days of the year; although I should be glad to have it intermit occasionally, on days when I feel particularly larky and indifferent, when I might meet you without being bowed down with shame.

To speak seriously, however, I agree in what you say, that the position I am now in (Professorship, book published and all) does give me a very good pedestal for carrying on psychical research effectively, or rather for disseminating its results effectively. I find however that *narratives* are a weariness, and I must confess that the reading of narratives for which I have no personal responsibility is almost

intolerable to me. Those that come to me at first-hand, incidentally to the Census, I get interested in. Others much less so; and I imagine my case is a very common case. One page of experimental thought-transference work will "carry" more than a hundred of "Phantasms of the Living." I shall stick to my share of the latter, however; and expect in the summer recess to work up the results already gained in an article<sup>1</sup> for "Scribner's Magazine," which will be the basis for more publicity and advertising and bring in another bundle of Schedules to report on at the Congress. Of course I wholly agree with you in regard to the *ultimate* future of the business, and fame will be the portion of him who may succeed in naturalizing it as a branch of legitimate science. I think it quite on the cards that you, with your singular tenacity of purpose, and wide look at all the intellectual relations of the thing, may live to be the ultra-Darwin yourself. Only the facts are *so* discontinuous so far that possibly all our generation can do may be to get 'em called facts. I'm a bad fellow to investigate on account of my bad memory for anecdotes and other disjointed details. Teaching of students will have to fill most of my time, I foresee; but of course my weather eye will remain open upon the occult world.

Our "Branch," you see, has tided over its difficulties temporarily; and by raising its fee will enter upon the new year with a certain momentum. You 'll have to bleed, though, ere the end, devoted creatures that you are, over there!

I thank you most heartily for your kind words about my book, and am touched by your faithful eye to the errata. The volumes were run through the press in less than seven weeks, and the proof-reading suffered. My friend

<sup>1</sup> "What Psychical Research has Accomplished," was first published in *The Forum*, 1892, vol. XIII, p. 727.

G. Stanley Hall, leader of American Psychology, has written that the book is the most complete piece of self-evisceration since Marie Bashkirtseff's diary. Don't you think that's rather unkind? But in this age of nerves all philosophizing is really something of that sort. I finished yesterday the writing of an address on Ethics which I have to give at Yale College; and, on the way hither in the cars, I read the last half of Rudyard Kipling's "The Light that Failed" — finding the latter indecently true to nature, but recognizing after all that my ethics and his novel were the same sort of thing. All literary men are sacrifices. "*Les festins humains qu'ils servent à leurs fêtes ressemblent la plupart à ceux des pélicans,*" etc., etc. Enough! . . .

*To W. D. Howells.*

CAMBRIDGE, Apr. 12, 1891.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,— You made me what seemed at the time a most reckless invitation at the Childs' one day — you probably remember it. It seemed to me improper then to take it up. But it has lain rankling in my mind ever since; and now, as the spring weather makes a young man's fancy lightly turn away from the metaphysical husks on which he has fed exclusively all winter to some more human reading, I say to myself, Why shouldn't I have copies, from the Author himself, of "Silas Lapham" and of the "Minister's Charge" — which by this time are almost the only things of yours which I have never possessed? Take this as thou wilt! . . .

*To W. D. Howells.*

CAMBRIDGE, June 12, 1891.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,— You are a sublime and immortal genius! I have just read "Silas Lapham" and "Lemuel

Barker" — strange that I should not have read them before, after hearing my wife rave about them so — and of all the perfect works of fiction they are the perfectest. The truth, in gross and in detail; the concreteness and solidity; the geniality, humanity, and unflagging humor; the steady way in which it keeps up without a dead paragraph; and especially the fidelity with which you stick to the ways of human nature, with the ideal and the unideal inseparably beaten up together so that you never give them "clear" — all make them a feast of delight, which, if I mistake not, will last for all future time, or as long as novels *can* last. Silas is the bigger total success because it deals with a more important story (I think you ought to have made young Corey *angrier* about Irene's mistake and its consequences); but the *work* on the much obstructed Lemuel surely was never surpassed. I hope his later life was happy!

Altogether *you* ought to be happy — you can fold your arms and write no more if you like. I've just got your "Criticism and Fiction," which shall speedily be read. And whilst in the midst of this note have received from the postman your clipping from Kate Field's "Washington," the author of which I can't divine, but she's a blessed creature whoever she is. Yours ever,

WM. JAMES.

*To Mrs. Henry Whitman.*

CAMBRIDGE, June 20, 1891.

MY DEAR MRS. WHITMAN,— You *are* magnificent. Here comes your letter at 6 o'clock, just as I am looking wearily out of the window for a change, and makes me feel like an aspiring youth again. But I can't go to Beverly tomorrow, nor indeed leave my room, I fear; for I've had every kind

of *-itis* that can afflict one's upper breathing channels, and although convalescent, am as weak as a blade of grass, and feel as antique as Methusalem. A fortnight hence I shall be like a young puppy-dog again, however, and shall turn up inevitably between two trains more than once ere the summer is over.

I've managed to get through Volume I of Scott's Journal in the last two days. The dear old boy! But who would not be "dear" who could have such a mass of doggerel running in his head all the time, and make a hundred thousand dollars a year just by letting his pen trickle? Bless his dear old "unenlightened" soul all the same! The Scotch are the finest race in the world — except the Baltimoreans<sup>1</sup> and Jews — and I think I enjoyed my twenty-four hours of Edinburgh two summers ago more than any twenty-four hours a city ever gave me.

Good-bye! I'm describing W. S.'s character when I ought to be describing yours — but you never give me a chance. When I get that task performed, we shall settle down to a solid basis; though probably all that will be in "the dim future." Meanwhile my love to all the Youth and Beauty (including your own) and best wishes for their happiness and freedom from influenzas of every description till the end of time. Affectionately yours,

W. J.

*To his Sister.*

CHOCORUA, N.H., July 6, 1891.

DEAREST ALICE,— . . . Of course [this medical verdict on your case may mean] as all men know, a finite length of days; and then, good-bye to neurasthenia and neuralgia

<sup>1</sup> It will be recalled that Mrs. Whitman had been a Baltimorean before she came to live in Boston.



and headache, and weariness and palpitation and disgust all at one stroke — I should think you would be reconciled to the prospect with all its pluses and minuses! I know you 've never cared for life, and to me, now at the age of nearly fifty, life and death seem singularly close together in all of us — and life a mere farce of frustration in all, so far as the realization of the innermost ideals go to which we are made respectively capable of feeling an affinity and responding. Your frustrations are only rather more flagrant than the rule; and you 've been saved many forms of self-dissatisfaction and misery which appertain to such a multiplication of responsible relations to different people as I, for instance, have got into. Your fortitude, good spirits and unsentimentality have been simply unexampled in the midst of your physical woes; and when you 're relieved from your post, just *that* bright note will remain behind, together with the inscrutable and mysterious character of the doom of nervous weakness which has chained you down for all these years. As for that, there 's more in it than has ever been told to so-called science. These inhibitions, these split-up selves, all these new facts that are gradually coming to light about our organization, these enlargements of the self in trance, etc., are bringing me to turn for light in the direction of all sorts of despised spiritualistic and unscientific ideas. Father would find in me today a much more receptive listener — all *that* philosophy has got to be brought in. And what a queer contradiction comes to the ordinary scientific argument against immortality (based on body being mind's condition and mind going *out* when body is gone), when one must believe (as now, in these neurotic cases) that some infernality in the body *prevents* really existing parts of the mind from coming to their effective rights at all, suppresses them, and blots them out from

participation in this world's experiences, although they are *there* all the time. When that which is *you* passes out of the body, I am sure that there will be an explosion of liberated force and life till then eclipsed and kept down. I can hardly imagine *your* transition without a great oscillation of both "worlds" as they regain their new equilibrium after the change! Everyone will feel the shock, but you yourself will be more surprised than anybody else.

It may seem odd for me to talk to you in this cool way about your end; but, my dear little sister, if one has things present to one's mind, and I know they are present enough to *your* mind, why not speak them out? I am sure you appreciate that best. How many times I have thought, in the past year, when my days were so full of strong and varied impression and activities, of the long unchanging hours in bed which those days stood for with you, and wondered how you bore the slow-paced monotony at all, as you did! You can't tell how I've pitied you. But you *shall* come to your rights ere long. Meanwhile take things gently. Look for the little good in each day as if life were to last a hundred years. Above all things, save yourself from bodily pain, if it can be done. You've had too much of that. Take all the morphia (or other forms of opium if that disagrees) you want, and don't be afraid of becoming an opium-drunkard. What was opium created for except for such times as this? Beg the good Katharine (to whom *our* debt can never be extinguished) to write me a line every week, just to keep the currents flowing, and so farewell until I write again. Your ever loving,

W. J.

The reader should not fail to realize, in reading the letter which follows, that it was written, not only while Münster-

berg was still a remote young psychologist in Germany, with no claim on James's consideration, but before there was any question of calling him to Harvard.

*To Hugo Münsterberg.*

CHOCORUA, July 8, 1891.

DEAR DR. MÜNSTERBERG,— I have just read Prof. G. E. Müller's review of you in the G. G. H., and find it in many respects so brutal that I am impelled to send you a word of "consolation," if such a thing be possible. German polemics in general are not distinguished by mansuetude; but there is something peculiarly hideous in the business when an established authority like Müller, instead of administering fatherly and kindly admonition to a youngster like yourself, shows a malign pleasure in knocking him down and jumping up and down upon his body. All your merits he passes by parenthetically as *selbstverständlich*; your sins he enlarges upon with unction. Don't mind it! Don't be angry! Turn the other cheek! Make no ill-mannered reply! — and great will be your credit and reward! Answer by continuing your work and making it more and more irreproachable.

I can't myself agree in some of your theories. *A priori*, your muscular sense-theory of psychic measurements seems to me incredible in many ways. Your general mechanical *Welt-anschauung* is too abstract and simple for my mind. But I find in you just what is lacking in this critique of Müller's — a sense for the perspective and proportion of things (so that, for instance, you *don't* make experiments and quote figures to the 100th decimal, where a coarse qualitative result is all that the question needs). Whose *theories* in Psychology have any *definitive* value to-

day? No one's! Their only use is to sharpen farther reflexion and observation. The man who throws out most new ideas and immediately seeks to subject them to experimental control is the most useful psychologist, in the present state of the science. No one has done this as yet as well as you. If you are only *flexible* towards your theories, and as ingenious in testing them hereafter as you have been hitherto, I will back you to beat the whole army of your critics before you are forty years old. Too much ambition and too much rashness are marks of a certain type of genius in its youth. The *destiny* of that genius depends on its power or inability to assimilate and get good out of such criticisms as Müller's. Get the good! forget the bad!—and Müller will live to feel ashamed of his tone.

I was very much grieved to learn from Delabarre lately that the doctors had found some weakness in your heart! What a wasteful thing is Nature, to produce a fellow like you, and then play such a trick with him! Bah! — But I prefer to think that it will be no serious impediment, if you only go *piani piano*. You will do the better work doubtless for doing it a little more slowly. Not long ago I was dining with some old gentlemen, and one of them asked, "What is the best assurance a man can have of a long and active life?" He was a doctor; and presently replied to his own question: "To be entirely broken-down in health before one is thirty-five!" — There is much truth in it; and though it applies more to nervous than to other diseases, we all can take our comfort in it. *I* was entirely broken-down before I was thirty. Yours cordially,

WM. JAMES.

Delabarre and Mackaye wrote to me of you with great admiration and gratitude for all they have gained.

*To Henry Holt.*

CHOCORUA, N.H., *July 24, 1891.*

MY DEAR HOLT,— I expect to send you within ten days the MS. of my "Briefer Course," boiled down to possibly 400 pages. By adding some twaddle about the senses, by leaving out all polemics and history, all bibliography and experimental details, all metaphysical subtleties and digressions, all quotations, all humor and pathos, all *interest* in short, and by blackening the tops of all the paragraphs, I think I have produced a tome of pedagogic classic which will enrich both you and me, if not the student's mind.

The difficulty is about when to correct the proofs. I've practically had no vacation so far, and won't touch them during August. I can start them September first up here. I can't rush them through in Cambridge as I did last year; but must do them leisurely, to suit this northern mail and its hours. I *could* have them done by another man in Cambridge, if there were desperate hurry; but on the whole I should prefer to do them myself.

Write and propose something! The larger book seems to be a decided success — especially from the literary point of view. I begin to look down upon Mark Twain! Yours ever,

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry James.*

ASHEVILLE, N.C., *Aug. 20, 1891.*

MY DEAR HARRY,— . . . Of poor Lowell's death you heard. I left Cambridge the evening of the funeral, for which I had waited over, and meant to write to you about it that very afternoon. But as it turned out, I did n't get a moment of time. . . . He had never been ill in his life till two years ago, and did n't seem to understand or realize

the fact as most people do. I doubt if he dreamed that his end was approaching until it was close at hand. Few images in my memory are more touching than the picture of his attitude in the last visits I paid him. He was always up and dressed, in his library, with his velvet coat and tobacco pipes, and ready to talk and be talked to, alluding to his illness with a sort of apologetic and whimsical plain-tiveness that had no querulousness in it, though he coughed incessantly, and the last time I was there (the last day of June, I think) he was strongly narcotized by opium for a sciatica which had lately supervened. Looking back at him, what strikes one most was his singularly boyish cheerfulness and robustness of temperament. He was a sort of a boy to the end, and makes most others seem like premature old men. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Miss Grace Ashburner, next addressed, and her sister Miss Anne Ashburner, were two old ladies, friends of James's parents, for whom he felt an especially affectionate regard. They, and their niece Miss Theodora Sedgwick, lived in Kirkland Street, next door to Professor Child and near the Norton family. They had become near neighbors as well as friends when James moved into his new house.

*To Miss Grace Ashburner.*

LINVILLE, N.C., Aug. 25, 1891.

MY DEAR MISS GRACE,—The time has come for that letter to be written! I have been thinking of you ever since I left home; but every letter-writing moment so far has been taken up by the information necessary to be im-

<sup>1</sup> Aug. 14. "Lowell's funeral at mid-day. . . . Went to Child's to say good-bye, and found Walcott, Howells, Cranch, etc. Poor dear old Child! We drank a glass standing to the hope of seeing Lowell again."

parted to my faithful spouse about my whereabouts, expenses, health, longings for home and the children, etc.; then a long-due letter to Harry had to be written, another to Alice, and one to Katharine Loring; finally, one to my Cousin Elly Emmet who is about to marry *en secondes nocces* a Scotchman, until at the last the moment is ripe for the most ideal correspondent of all!

I have at last "struck it rich" here in North Carolina, and am in the most peculiar, and one of the most poetic places I have ever been in. Strange to say, it is on the premises of a land speculation and would-be "boom." A tract of twenty-five square miles of wilderness, 3800 feet above the sea at its lowest part, has been bought; between 30 and 40 miles of the most admirable alpine, evenly-graded, zigzagging roads built in various directions from the centre, which is a smallish cleared plateau; an exquisite little hotel built; nine cottages round about it; and that is all. Not a loafer, not a fly, not a blot upon the scene! The serpent has not yet made his appearance in this Eden, around which stand the hills covered with primeval forest of the most beautiful description, filled with rhododendrons, laurels, and azaleas which, through the month of July, must make it ablaze with glory.

I went this morning on horseback with the manager of the concern, a really charming young North Carolinian educated at our Institute of Technology, to the top of "Grandfather Mountain" (close by, which the Company owns) and which is only a couple of hundred feet lower than Mt. Washington. The road, the forest, the view, the crags were as good as such things can be. Apparently the company had just planted a couple of hundred thousand dollars in *pure esthetics* — a most high-toned proceed-

ing in this degenerate age. Later, doubtless, a railroad, stores, and general sordidness with wealth will creep in. Meanwhile let us enjoy things! There "does be" advantages in creation as opposed to evolution, in the railway, in the telegraph and the electric light, and all that goes with them. This peculiar combination of virgin wilderness with perfectly planned roads, Queen Anne cottages, and a sweet little modern hotel, has never been realized until our day.

But what am I doing? I always held a descriptive letter in abhorrence: sentiment is the only thing that should be allowed a place in a correspondence between two persons of opposite genders. But to feel sentiment is one thing, and to express it both forcibly and gracefully is another. Had I but the pen of an F. J. Child, I might do something. As it is, my dear, dear Miss Grace, I can only rather dumbly say how everlastingly tender was, is and ever shall be the emotion which accompanies my thoughts of you. Especially in these days when your patience and good spirits add such a halo to you and to your sister too. I am fast overtaking you in age, and it gives the deepest sort of satisfaction to feel the process of growing together with one's old friends as one does. "Thought is deeper than all speech," so I will say no more. I shall hope to see you, and see you feeling well, before the week is over. Meanwhile, with heartiest affection to your dear sister, and to Theodora as well as to yourself, I am always, your loving,

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry James.*

CAMBRIDGE, Apr. 11, 1892.

MY DEAR HARRY,—. . . I have been seething in a fever of politics about the future of our philosophy department.



Harvard must lead in psychology; and I, having founded her laboratory, am not the man to carry on the practical work. I have *almost* succeeded, however, in clinching a bargain whereby Münsterberg, the ablest experimental psychologist in Germany, allowance made for his being only 28 years old,—he is in fact the Rudyard Kipling of psychology,—is to come here. When he does he will scoop out all the other universities as far as that line of work goes. We have also had another scheme, at the various stages of which you, Balzac or Howells ought to have been present, to work up for a novel or the stage. There's a great comedy yet to be made out of the University newly founded by the American millionaire. In this case the millionaire had announced his desire to found a professorship of psychology applied to education. The thing was to get it for Harvard, which he mistrusted. I went at him tooth and nail, trying to persuade him that Royce was the man. Letters, *pour-parlers*, visits (he lives in N. Y.), finally a two-days' visit at this house, and a dinner for him. He is a real Balzackian figure — a regular porker, coarse, vulgar, vain, cunning, mendacious, etc., etc. The worst of it is that he will probably give us nothing,—having got all the attention and flattery from us at which he aimed,—so that we have our labor for our pains, and the gods laugh as they say "served them right."

I have long been meaning to write of my intense enjoyment of Du Maurier's "Peter Ibbetson," which I verily believe will be one of the classics of the English tongue. The *beauty* of it goes beyond everything — and the light and happy touch — the rapid style! Please tell him if you see him that we are all on our knees. Your last book fell into Margaret Gibbens's hands, and I have barely seen it. I shan't have time to read it till the voyage. . . .

*To Miss Mary Tappan.*

CAMBRIDGE, April 29, 1892.

MY DEAR MARY,—Your kind letter about poor Alice came today, and makes me do what I have long been on the *point* of doing — write a friendly word to you. Yes, Alice's death is a great release to her; she longed for it; and it is in a sense a release to all of us. In spite of its terrific frustrations her life was a triumph all the same, as I now see it. Her particular burden was borne well. She never whimpered or complained of her sickness, and never seemed to turn her face towards it, but up to the very limit of her allowance attended to outer things. When I went to London in September to bid her good-bye, she altogether refused to waste a minute in talking about her disease, and conversed only of the English people and Harry's play. So her soul was not subdued! I wish that mine might ever be as little so! Poor Harry is left rather disconsolate. He habitually stored up all sorts of things to tell her, and now he has no ear into which to pour their like. He says her talk was better than anyone's he knew in London. Strange to say, altho' practically bedridden for years, her mental atmosphere, barring a little over-vehemence, was altogether that of the *grand monde*, and the information about both people and public affairs which she had the art of absorbing from the air was astonishing.

We are probably all going to Europe on the 25th of May — [SS.] Friesland [to] Antwerp. Both Alice and I need a "year off," and I hope we shall get it. Our winter abode is yet unknown. I wish you were going to stay and we could be near you. I wish anyhow we might meet this summer and talk things over. It does n't pay in this short life for good old friends to be non-existent for each other; and how can one write letters of friendship when letters of business fill

every chink of time? I *do hope* we shall meet, my dear Mary. Both of us send you lots of love, and plenty to Ellen too. Yours ever,

W. J.

James sailed for Antwerp with his family on May 25, and escaped not only from college duties but from the postman and from his writing-table. He spent the summer in the Black Forest and Switzerland before moving down to Florence in September. It happened that a few weeks were passed in a *pension* at Vers-chez-les-Blanc above the Lake of Geneva, in which Professor Theodore Flournoy of the University of Geneva, to whom the next letter but one is addressed, was also spending his vacation with his family. Flournoy had reviewed the "Principles" in the "Journal de Genève," and there had already been some correspondence between the two men. At Vers-chez-les-Blanc a real friendship sprang up quickly. It grew deeper and closer as the years slipped by, for in temperament and mental outlook the Swiss and the American were close kin.

*To Miss Grace Ashburner.*

GRYON, SWITZERLAND, *July 13, 1892.*

MY DEAR MISS GRACE, or rather, let me say, MY DEAR GRACE,—since what avails such long friendship and affection, if not that privilege of familiarity? I have thought of you often and of the quiet place that harbors you, but have been too distracted as yet to write any letters but necessary ones on business. We have been in Europe five and a half weeks and are only just beginning to see a ray of daylight on our path. How could Arthur, how could Madame Lucy,<sup>1</sup> see us go off and not raise a more solemn

<sup>1</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Sedgwick. Mr. Sedgwick was Miss Ashburner's nephew.

word of warning? It seems to me that the most solemn duty *I* can have in what remains to me of life will be to save my inexperienced fellow beings from ignorantly taking their little ones abroad when they go for their own refreshment. To combine novel anxieties of the most agonizing kind about your children's education, nocturnal and diurnal contact of the most intimate sort with their shrieks, their quarrels, their questions, their rollings-about and tears, in short with all their emotional, intellectual and bodily functions, in what practically in these close quarters amounts to one room — to combine these things (I say) with a *holiday* for *oneself* is an idea worthy to emanate from a lunatic asylum. The wear and tear of a professorship for a year is not equal to one week of this sort of thing. But let me not complain! Since I am responsible for their being, I will launch them worthily upon life; and if a foreign education is required, they shall have it. Only why talk of "sabbatical" years? — there is the hideous mockery! Alice, if she writes to you, will (after her feminine fashion) gloze over this aspect of our existence, because she has been more or less accustomed to it all these years and *on the whole does not dislike it* (!!), but I for once will speak frankly and not disguise my sufferings. Here in this precipitous Alpine village we occupy rooms in an empty house with a yellow-plastered front and an iron balcony above the street. Up and down that street the cows, the goats, the natives, and the tourists pass. The church-roof and the pastor's house are across the way, dropped as it were twenty feet down the slope. Close beside us are populous houses either way, and others beside *them*. Yet on that iron balcony all the innermost mysteries of the James family are blazoned and bruited to the entire village. *Things* are dried there, quarrels, screams and squeals rise

incessantly to Heaven, dressing and undressing are performed, punishments take place — recriminations, arguments, execrations — with a publicity after which, if there *were* reporters, we should never be able to show our faces again. And when I think of that cool, spacious and quiet mansion lying untenanted in Irving Street, with a place in it for everything, and everything in its place when *we* are there, I could almost weep for “the pity of it.” But we may get used to this as other travelers do — only Arthur and Lucy ought to have dropped some word of warning ere we came away!

Our destiny seems relentlessly driving us towards Paris, which on the whole I rather hate than otherwise, only the educational problem promises a better solution there. The boys meanwhile have got started on French lessons here, and though we must soon “move on” like a family of wandering Jews, we shall probably leave one behind in the pastor’s family hard-by. The other boy we shall get into a family somewhere else, and then have none but Peg and the baby to cope with. Perhaps strength will be given us for that.

Switzerland meanwhile is an unmitigated blessing, from the mountains down to the bread and butter and the beds. The people, the arrangements, the earth, the air and the sky, are satisfactory to a degree hard to imagine beforehand. There is an extraordinary absence of feminine beauty, but great kindness, absolute honesty, fixed tariffs and prices for everything, etc., etc., and of course absolutely clean hotels at prices which, though not the “dirt cheap” ones of former times, are yet very cheap compared with the American standard. We stayed for ten days at a *pension* on the Lake of Lucerne which was in all respects as beautiful and ideal as any scene on the operatic stage, yet we paid

just about what the Childs pay at Nickerson's vile and filthy hotel at Chocorua. Of course we made the acquaintance of Cambridge people there whose acquaintance we had not made before — I mean the family of Joseph Henry Thayer of the Divinity School, whose daughter Miriam, with her splendid playing and general grace and amiability, was a proof of how much hidden wealth Cambridge contains.

But I have talked too much about ourselves and ought to talk about you. What can I do, however, my dear Grace, except express hopes? I know that you have had a hot summer, but I know little else. Have you borne it well? Have you had any relief from your miserable suffering state? or have you gone on as badly or worse than ever? Of course you can't answer these questions, but some day Theodora will. I devoutly trust that things have gone well and that you may even have been able to see some friends, and in that way get a little change. Your sister, to whom pray give the best love of both of us, is I suppose holding her own as bravely as ever; only I should like to know the fact, and that too Theodora will doubtless ere long acquaint us with. To that last-named exemplary and delightful Being give also our best love; and with any amount of it of the tenderest quality for yourself, believe me, always your affectionate,

WM. JAMES.

Love to all the Childs, please, and all the Nortons who may be within reach.

*To Theodore Flournoy.*

PENSIONE VILLA MAGGIORE  
(PALLANZA), Sept. 19, 1892.

MY DEAR FLOURNOY,— Your most agreeable letter — one of those which one preserves to read in one's old age —

came yesterday. . . . I am much obliged to you for the paper by Sécrotan, and (unless you deny me the permission) I propose to keep it, and let you get a new one, which you can do more easily than I. It is much too oracular and brief, but its *pregnancy* is a good example of what an intellect gains by growing old: one says vast things simply. I read it stretched on the grass of Monte Motterone, the Rigi of this region, just across the Lake, with all the kingdoms of the earth stretched before me, and I realized how exactly a philosophic *Weltansicht* resembles that from the top of a mountain. You are driven, as you ascend, into a choice of fewer and fewer paths, and at last you end in two or three simple attitudes from each of which we see a great part of the Universe amazingly simplified and summarized, but nowhere the entire view at once. I entirely agree that Renouvier's system fails to satisfy, but it seems to me the classical and consistent expression of *one* of the great attitudes: that of insisting on logically intelligible formulas. If one goes beyond, one must abandon the hope of *formulas* altogether, which is what all pious sentimentalists do; and with them M. Sécrotan, since he fails to give any articulate substitute for the "Criticism" he finds so unsatisfactory. Most philosophers give formulas, and inadmissible ones, as when Sécrotan makes a *memoire sans oubli* = *duratio tota simul* = eternity!

I have been reading with much interest the articles on the will by Fouillée, in the "Revue Philosophique" for June and August. There are admirable descriptive pages, though the final philosophy fails to impress me much. I am in good condition now, and must try to do a little methodical work every day in Florence, in spite of the temptations to *flânerie* of the sort of life.

I did hope to have spent a few days in Geneva before

crossing the mountains! But perhaps, for the holidays, you and Madame Flournoy will cross them to see us at Florence. The Vers-chez-les-Blanc days are something that neither she nor I will forget!

You and I are strangely contrasted as regards our professorial responsibilities: you are becoming entangled in laboratory research and demonstration just as I am getting emancipated. As regards *demonstrations*, I think you will not find much difficulty in concocting a programme of classical observations on the senses, etc., for students to verify; it worked much more easily at Harvard than I supposed it would when we applied it to the whole class, and it improved the spirit of the work very much. As regards *research*, I advise you not to take that duty too conscientiously, if you find that ideas and projects do not abound. As long as [a] man is working at anything, he must give up other things at which he might be working, and the best thing he can work at is usually the thing he does most spontaneously. You philosophize, according to your own account, more spontaneously than you work in the laboratory. So do I, and I always felt that the occupation of philosophizing was with me a valid excuse for neglecting laboratory work, since there is not time for both. Your work as a philosopher will be more *irreplaceable* than what results you might get in the laboratory out of the same number of hours. Some day, I feel sure, you will find yourself impelled to publish some of your reflections. Until then, take notes and read, and feel that your true destiny is on the way to its accomplishment! It seems to me that a great thing would be to add a new course to your instruction. Au revoir, my dear friend! My wife sends "a great deal of love" to yours, and says she will write to her as soon as we get settled. I also send my most cordial greetings to



Madame Flourney. Remember me also affectionately to those charming young *demoiselles*, who will, I am afraid, incontinently proceed to forget me. Always affectionately yours,

WM. JAMES.

*To William M. Salter.*

FLORENCE, Oct. 6, 1892.

. . . So the magician Renan is no more! I don't know whether you were ever much subject to his spell. If so, you have a fine subject for Sunday lectures! The queer thing was that he so slowly worked his way to his natural mental attitude of irony and persiflage, on a basis of moral and religious material. He levitated at last to his true level of superficiality, emancipating himself from layer after layer of the inhibitions into which he was born, and finally using the old moral and religious vocabulary to produce merely musical and poetic effects. That moral and religious ideals, seriously taken, involve certain refusals and renunciations of freedom, Renan seemed at last entirely to forget. On the whole, his sweetness and mere literary coquetry leave a displeasing impression, and the only way to handle him is not to take him heavily or seriously. The worst is, he was a prig in his ideals. . . .

*To James F. Putnam.*

16 PIAZZA DELL' INDIPENDENZA,  
FLORENCE, Oct. 7, 1892.

MY DEAR JIM,— We got your delightful letter ever so long ago, and nothing but invincible lethargy on my part, excusing itself to conscience by saying, "I must n't write till I have something definitive to announce," is responsible for this delay. The lethargy was doubtless the healthy

reversion of the nervous system to its normal equilibrium again, so I let it work. And the conscientious sophism was not so unreasonable after all. My brain has gradually got working in a natural manner again, and we are definitively settled for the winter, so the time for a line to you has come.

To begin with, your letter sounded delicious, and I like to think of you as enjoying the neighborhood of our good little [Chocorua] lake so much, and particularly as expressing such satisfaction in the look of our little place. If it has n't "style," it has at least a harmonious domesticity of appearance. A recent letter referred to "Dr. Putnam's" place on the hill across the lake, as if you or Charlie might have been buying over there too. Is this so? I shall be very glad if it is so.

As for ourselves, coming abroad with a pack of children is not the same thing in reality as it is on paper. A summer full of passive enjoyment is one thing, a summer full of care for the present and anxious schemes for the coming winter is another. When you come abroad, come with Marian for the summer only and leave the children at home. Of course they have gained perception and intelligence, and if this Florence school only turns out well, they will have a good deal of French, and other experiences which will be precious to them hereafter; so that on their [account] there will be nothing to regret. But the parental organism in sore need of recuperative vacation gets a great deal more of it per dollar and per day if allowed to wander by itself. Enough now of this philosophy! . . .

I am telling you nothing of our summer, most all of which was passed in Switzerland. Germany is good, but Switzerland is better. *How* good Switzerland is, is something that can't be described in words. The healthiness of it passes all utterance — the air, the roads, the mountains, the

customs, the institutions, the people. Not a breath of art, poetry, esthetics, morbidness, or "suggestions"! It is all there, solid meat and drink for the sick body and soul, ready to be turned to, and do you infallible good when the nervous and gas-lit side of life has had too much play. What a see-saw life is, between the elemental things and the others! We must have both; but aspiration for aspiration, I think that of the over-cultured and exquisite person for the insipidity of health is the more pathetic. After the suggestiveness, decay and over-refinement of Florence this winter, I shall be hungry enough for the eternal elements to be had in Schweiz. I did n't do any high climbing, for which my legs and *Schwindeligkeit* both unfit me, but any amount of solid moderate walking (say four to six hours a day), which did me a lot of good. I envy the climbers, though!

Now that my brain begins to work again, I have mapped out a profitable course of winter reading, *Naturphilosophie* and *Kunstgeschichte*, and, if the boys' school is only as good as it is cracked up to be, we shall have had a good year. Alice is very well, and much refreshed in spite of maternal cares and perplexities. . . . Love from both of us to both of you, and wishes for a good winter. Love also to all your family circle, especially Annie, and to Mrs. Wynne if she be near.

W. J.

*To Miss Grace Ashburner.*

16 PIAZZA DELL INDIPENDENZA  
FLORENCE, Oct. 19, 1892.

MY DEAR GRACE,—It is needless to say that your long and delightful reply written by Theodora's self-effacing hand reached us duly, and that I have "been on the point"

of writing to you again ever since. That "point" as you well know, is one to which somehow one seems long to cleave without jumping off. But at last here goes — irrevocably! I did not expect that in your condition you would be either so conscientious or so energetic as to send so immediate and full a return, and I must expressly stipulate, my dear old friend, that the sole condition upon which I write now is that you shall not feel that I expect a single word of answer. (Needless to say, however, how much any infringement of this condition on your part will be *enjoyed*.)

Well! Cold and wet drove us out of Switzerland that first week in September, though, as it turned out, we should have had a fine rest of the month if we had stayed. We crossed the Simplon to Pallanza on Lake Maggiore, where we stayed ten days, till the bad fare made us sick; and then came straight to Florence by the 21st. As almost no strangers had arrived, we had the pick of all the furnished apartments, most of which threatened great bleakness or gloominess for the winter, with their high ceilings, and *some* rooms in all of them lit from court or well. Our family seems to be of the maximum size for which apartments are made! We found but this one into all the rooms of which the sun can come either before- or after-noon. It is clean, and abundantly furnished with sofas and chairs, but not a "convenience for housekeeping" of any kind whatsoever. No oven in which to make the macaroni *au gratin*, no place to keep more than a week's supply of charcoal, or I fear more than three or four days' supply of wood for the fire when the cold weather comes, as come it will with a vengeance, from all accounts. I hope our children won't freeze!

Harry and Billy started school at last two days ago, and glad I am to see them at it. In the immortal words of our

townsman Rindge in his monumental inscription, "every man" (and "every" boy!) "should have an honest occupation."<sup>1</sup> What they need is comrades of their own age, and competitive play and work, rather than monuments of antiquity or landscape beauty. Animal, not vegetable or mineral life is their element. The school is English, they'll get no more French or German there than at Browne and Nichols's [school at home] and they'll have to begin Italian, I'm afraid, which will be pure interruption and leave not a rack behind after they've been home a year. Still one must n't always grumble about one's children, and they are getting an amount of perception over here, and a freedom from prejudices about American things and ways, which will certainly be of general service to their intelligence, and be worth more to them hereafter than their year would have been if spent in drill for the Harvard exams — even if what they lose do amount to a whole year, which I much doubt. But I think it may be called certain that they shan't be kept abroad a *second* year!

For ourselves, Florence is delicious. I have a sort of organic protestation against certain things here, the toneless air in the streets, which feels like used-up indoor air, the "general debility" which pervades all ways and institutions, the worn-out faces, etc., etc. But the charming sunny manners, the old-world picturesqueness wherever you cast your eye, and above all, the magnificent remains of art, redeem it all, and insidiously spin a charm round one which might well end by turning one into one of these mere northern loungers here for the rest of one's days, recreant to all one's native instincts. The stagnancy of the thermometer is the great thing. Day after day a changeless air, sometimes sun and sometimes shower, but no other difference

<sup>1</sup> See vol. II, p. 39 *infra*.

except possibly from week to week the faintest possible progress in the direction of cold. It must be very good for one's nerves after our acrobatic climate. We have an excellent man-cook, the most faithful of beings, at two and a half dollars a week. He never goes out except to market, and understands, strange to say, the naked Latin roots without terminations in which we hold *unsweet* discourse with him. But on Dante and Charles Norton's *admirable* "pony" I am getting up the lingo fast!

All this time I am saying nothing about you or your sister, or the dear Childs, or the Nortons, or anyone. Of your own condition we have got very scanty news indeed since your letter. . . . Perhaps Theodora will just sit down and write two pages,—not a letter, if she is n't ready; but just two pages—to give some authentic account of how the fall finds you all, especially you. I hope the opium business and all has not given you additional trouble, and that the pain has not made worse havoc than before. When one thinks of your patience and good cheer, my dear, dear Grace, through all of life, one feels grateful to the Higher Powers for the example. Please take the heartfelt love of both of us, give some to your dear sister and to Theodora, and believe me ever your affectionate,

WM. JAMES.

Love too, to the Nortons, old and young, and to the Childs.

*To Josiah Royce.*

FLORENCE, Dec. 18, 1892.

BELoved JOSIAH,—Your letter of Oct. 12, with "mis-sent Indian mail" stamped upon its envelope in big letters, was handed in only ten days ago, after I had long said in my heart that you were no true friend to leave me thus

languishing so long in ignorance of all that was befalling in Irving St. and the country round about. Its poetical hyperboles about the way I was missed made amends for everything, so I am not now writing to ask you for my diamonds back, or to return my ringlet of your hair. It was a beautiful and bully letter and filled the hearts of both of us with exceeding joy. I have heard since then from the Gibbenses that you are made Professor — I fear at not more than \$3000. But still it is a step ahead and I congratulate you most heartily thereupon.

What I most urgently wanted to hear from you was some estimate of Münsterberg, and when you say, "he is an immense success," you may imagine how I am pleased. He has his foibles, as who has not; but I have a strong impression that that youth will be a great man. Moreover, his naïveté and openness of nature make him very lovable. I do hope that [his] English will go — of course there can be no question of the students liking him, when once he gets his communications open. He has written me exhaustive letters, and seems to be outdoing even you in the amount of energizing which he puts forth. May God have him in his holy keeping!

From the midst of my laziness here the news I get from Cambridge makes it seem like a little seething Florence of the XVth Century. Having all the time there is, to myself, I of course find I have no time for doing any particular duties, and the consequence is that the days go by without anything very serious accomplished. But we live well and are comfortable by means of sheet-iron stoves which the clammy quality of the cold rather than its intensity seems to necessitate, and Italianism is "striking in" to all of us to various degrees of depth, shallowest of all I fear in Peg and the baby. When *Gemüthlichkeit* is banished from the

world, it will still survive in this dear and shabby old country; though I suppose the same sort of thing is really to be found in the East even more than in Italy, and that we shall seek it there when Italy has got as tram-roaded and modernized all over as Berlin. It is a curious smell of the past, that lingers over everything, speech and manners as well as stone and stuffs!

I went to Padua last week to a Galileo anniversary. It was splendidly carried out, and great fun; and they gave all of us foreigners honorary degrees. I rather like being a doctor of the University of Padua, and shall feel more at home than hitherto in the "Merchant of Venice." I have written a letter to the "Nation" about it, which I commend to the attention of your gentle partner.<sup>1</sup> . . .

Mark Twain is here for the winter in a villa outside the town, hard at work writing something or other. I have seen him a couple of times — a fine, soft-fibred little fellow with the perversest twang and drawl, but very human and good. I should think that one might grow very fond of him, and wish he'd come and live in Cambridge.

I am just beginning to wake up from the sort of mental palsy that has been over me for the past year, and to take a little "notice" in matters philosophical. I am now reading Wundt's curiously long-winded "System," which, in spite of his intolerable sleekness and way of *soaping* everything on to you by plausible transitions so as to make it run continuous, has every now and then a compendiously stated truth, or *aperçu*, which is nourishing and instructive. Come March, I will send you proposals for my work next year, to the "Cosmology" part of which I am just beginning to wake up. [A. W.] Benn, of the history of Greek

<sup>1</sup> See "The Galileo Festival at Padua": *Nation* (New York), Jan. 5, 1893; a four-column account of the Festival.



Philosophy, is here, a shy Irishman (I should judge) with a queer manner, whom I have only seen a couple of times, but with whom I shall probably later take some walks. He seems a good and well-informed fellow, much devoted to astronomy, and I have urged your works on his attention. He lent me the "New World" with your article in it, which I read with admiration. Would that belief would ensue! Perhaps I shall get straight.

I have just been "penning" a notice of Renouvier's "Principes de la Nature" for Schurman.<sup>1</sup> Renouvier cannot be *true* — his world is so much *dust*. But that conception is a *zu überwindendes Moment*, and he has given it its most energetic expression. There is a theodicy at the end, a speculation about this being a world fallen, which ought to interest you much from the point of view of your own Cosmology.

Münsterberg wrote me, and I forgot to remark on it in my reply, that Scripture wanted him to contribute to a new Yale psychology review, but that he wished to publish in a volume. I confess it disgusts me to hear of each of these little separate college tin-trumpets. What I should really like would be a philosophic *monthly* in America, which would be all sufficing, as the "Revue Philosophique" is in France. If it were a monthly, Münsterberg could find room for all his contributions from the laboratory. But I don't suppose that Scripture will combine with Schurman any more than Hall would, or for the matter of that, I don't know whether Schurman himself would wish it. . . .

. What are you working at? Is the Goethe work started? Is music raging round you both as of yore? How are the children? We heard last night the new opera by Mascagni, "I Rantzau," which has made a *furor* here and which

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Review* (1893), vol. II, p. 213.

I enjoyed hugely. How is Santayana, and what is he up to? You can't tell how thick the atmosphere of Cambridge seems over here? "Surcharged with vitality," in short. Write again whenever you can spare a fellow a half hour, and believe me, with warmest regards from both of us to both of you, yours always,

WM. JAMES.

Pray give love to Palmer, Nichols, Santayana, Münsterberg, and all.

*To Miss Grace Norton.*

FLORENCE, Dec. 28, 1892.

MY DEAR GRACE,— I hope that my silence has not left you to think that I have forgotten all the ties of friendship. Far from it! — but have *you* never felt the rapture of day after day with no letter to write, nor the shrinking from breaking the spell by changing a limitless possibility of future outpouring into a shabby little actual scrawl? Remote, unwritten to and unheard from, you seem to me something ideal, off there in your inaccessible Cambridge palazzo, bathed in the angelic American light, occupying your mind with noble literature, pure, solitary, incontaminate — a station from which the touch of this vulgar epistle will instantly bring you down; for you will have been imagining your poor correspondent in the same high and abstract fashion until what he says breaks the charm (as infallibly it must), and with the perception of his finiteness must also come a faint sense of discouragement as if *you* were finite too — for communications bring the communicants to a common level. All of which sounds, my dear Grace, as if I were refraining from writing to you out of my well-known habit of "metaphysical politeness"; or trying to make you think so. But I think I can trust you

to see that all these elaborate conceits (which seem imitated from the choice Italian manner, and which I confess have flowed from my pen quite unpremeditatedly and somewhat to my own surprise) are nothing but a shabby cloak under which I am trying to hide my own palpable *laziness* — a laziness which even the higher affections can only render a little restless and uncomfortable, but not dispel.— However, it *is* dispelled at last, is n't it? So let me begin.

You will have heard stray tidings of us from time to time, so I need give you no detailed account of our peregrinations or decisions. We had a delicious summer in Switzerland, that noble and medicinal country, and we have now got into first-rate shape at Florence, although there is a menace of "sociability" commencing, which may take away that wonderful and unexampled sense of peace. I have been enjoying [myself] of late in sitting under the lamp until midnight, secure against any possible interruption, and reading what things I pleased. I believe that last year in Cambridge I counted one single night in which I could sit and read passively till bedtime; and now that the days have begun to lengthen and that the small end of winter appears looking through the future, I begin to count them here as something unspeakably precious that may ne'er return.

The boys are at an English school which, though certainly very good, gives them rather less French and German than they would have at Browne and Nichols's. Peg is having first-rate "opportunities" in the way of dancing, gymnastics and other accomplishments of a bodily sort. We have a little shred of a half-starved, but very cheerful, ex-ballet dancer who brings a poor little, humble, peering-eyed fiddler — "Maestro" she calls him — three times a week to our big salon, and makes supple the limbs of Peg

and the two infants of Dr. Baldwin by the most wonderful patience and diversity of exercises at five francs a lesson. When one thinks of the sort of lessons the children at Cambridge get, and of the sort of price they pay, it makes one feel that geography is a tremendous frustrator of the so-called laws of demand and supply.

Alice and I lunched this noon with young Loeser, whose name you may remember some years ago in Cambridge. He is devoted to the scientific study of pictures, and I hope to gain some truth from him ere we leave. He is a dear good fellow. Baron Ostensacken is also here — I forget whether you used to know him. The same quaint, cheerful, nervous, intelligent, rather egotistic old bachelor that he used to be, who also runs to pictures in his old age, after the strictly entomological method, I fancy, this time; for I doubt whether he cares near as much for the pictures themselves as for the science of them. But you can't keep science out of anything in these bad times. Love is dead, or at any rate seems weak and shallow wherever science has taken possession. I am glad that, being incapable of anything like scholarship in any line, I still can take some pleasure from these pictures in the way of love; particularly glad since some years ago I thought that my care for pictures had faded away with youth. But with better opportunities it has revived. Loeser describes Bôcher as *basking* in the presence of pictures, as if it were an amusing way of taking them, whereas it is the true way. Is Mr. Bôcher giving his lectures or talks again at your house?

Duveneck<sup>1</sup> is here, but I have seen very little of him. The professor is an oppressor to the artist, I fear; and metaphysical politeness has kept me from pressing him too much. What an awful trade that of professor is — paid to talk,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Frank Duveneck, painter and sculptor, now of Cincinnati.

talk, talk! I have seen artists growing pale and sick whilst I talked to them without being able to stop. And I loved them for not being able to love me any better. It would be an awful universe if *everything* could be converted into words, words, words.

I have been so sorry to hear of the miserable condition of so many of your family circle this summer. . . . Give my love to your brother Charles, to Sally, Lily, Dick, Margaret and all the dear creatures. Also to the other dears on both sides of the Kirkland driveway. I hope and trust that your winter is passing cheerfully and healthily away. With warm good wishes for a happy new year, and affectionate greetings from both of us, believe me always yours,

WM. JAMES.

It will be recalled that Miss Gibbens, to whom the next letter was addressed, was Mrs. James's sister.

*To Miss Margaret Gibbens (Mrs. L. R. Gregor).*

FLORENCE, Jan. 3, 1893.

BELOVED MARGARET,—A happy New Year to you all! My immediate purpose in writing is to celebrate Alice's social greatness, and to do humble penance for the obstacles I have persistently thrown in her path. By which I mean that the dinner which we gave on Sunday night, and which she with great equanimity got up, was a perfect success. She began, according to her wont, after we had been in the apartment a fortnight, to say that we must give a dinner to the Villaris, etc. If you could have seen the manner of our *ménage* at that time, you would have excused the terrible severity of the tones in which I rebuked her, and the copious eloquence in which I described our past, present,

and future life and circumstances and expressed my doubts as to whether she ought not to inhabit an asylum rather than an apartment. As time wore on we got a waitress, and added dessert spoons, fruit knives, etc., etc., to our dining-room resources; also got some silver polish, etc.; and Alice would keep returning to the idea in a way which made *me*, I confess, act like the madman with whose conversation at such times (dictated I must say by the highest social responsibility) you are acquainted. At last she invited the Lorings, I. Ostensacken and Loeser for New Year's night; I groaning, she smiling; I hopeless and abusive, she confident and defensive, of our resources; I doing all I could to add to her burden and make things impossible, she explaining to Raffaello in her inimitable Italian, drilling the handmaids, screening the direful lamp most successfully with three Japanese umbrellas after I contended that it was impossible to do so, procuring the only two little red petticoats in the city to put on our two candles, making a bunch of flowers, so small in the centre of a star of fern leaves that I bitterly laughed at it, look exquisitely lovely — and then, with her beautiful countenance, which always becomes transfigured in the presence of company, keeping the conversation going till after eleven o'clock. I humbly prostrated myself before her after it was over,— for the table really looked sweet — no human being would have believed it beforehand,— threw the wood-ashes on my head, and swore that she should have the Villaris, and the King of Italy if she wished and whenever she wished, and that I would write to you in token of my shame. It will please your mother to hear what a successful creature she is. Her diet is still eccentric,— flying from one extreme of abstinence to another, — and her sleep fitful and accidental in

its times and seasons. She sits up very late at night, and slumbers publicly when afternoon visitors come in, upright in her chair, with the lamp shining full on her beautiful countenance from which all traces of struggle have disappeared and [where] sleep reigns calmly victorious — at least she did this once lately. . . .

P. S. On reading this to Alice she says she does n't see what call I had to write it, and that as for my obstructing the dinner, I had n't made it more impossible than I always make everything. This with a sweet ironical smile which I can't give on paper. . . .

*To Francis Boott.*

FLORENCE, Jan. 30, 1893.

DEAR MR. BOOTT,— Your letter of Dec. 15th was very welcome, with its home gossip and its Florentine advice. Our winter has worn away, as you see, with very little discomfort from cold. It is true that I have been irritated at the immovable condition of my bed-room thermometer which, for five weeks, has been at 40° F., not shifting in all that time more than one degree either way, until I longed for a change; but how much better such steadfastness than the acrobatic performances of our American winter-thermometer. You and other sybarites scared us so, in the fall, about the arctic cold we should have, that I used daily to make vows to the Creator and the Saints that, if they would only carry us safely to the first of February, I never would ask them for another favor as long as I lived. With the impending winter once *overcome* I thought life would be one long vista of relief thenceforth. But practically there has been nothing *to overcome*. I am glad, however, that now that January disappears, we may have some warm days, coming more and more frequently. The spring must

be really delicious. We are keeping as shy of "Society" as we can, but still we see a good many people, and the interruptions to study (from that, and the domestic causes which abound in our narrow quarters — narrow in winter-time, broad enough when fires go out) are very great.

Duveneck<sup>1</sup> spent a most delightful evening here a while ago, and left a big portfolio of photos of Böcklin's pictures and a big bunch of cigars for me two days later. I wish I did n't always feel like a *phrase-monger* with honest artists like him. However there are some fellows who seem phrase-mongers to me, X——, *e.g.*, so it's "square." . . . We have a cook, Raffaello, the most modest and faithful of his sex. Our manner of communication with him is *awful*; but he finishes all our sentences for us, and, strange to say, just as we would have finished them if we could. Alice swears we must bring him home to America. Should you think it safe? He seems to have no friends or diversions here, and no love except for his saucepans. But I dread the responsibility of being foster-father to him in our cold and uncongenial land. It would be different if I spoke his lingo.— What do *you* think?

And *what* a pretty lingo it is! Italian and German seem to me *the* languages. The mongrels French and English might drop out!

Apropos to English, I return your slip [about the teaching of English?] "as per request," having been amused at the manifestation of the ruling passion in you. I don't care how incorrect language may be if it only has fitness of epithet, energy and clearness. But I do pity the poor English Department. I see they are talking in England of more study of their own tongue in the schools being required. . . . Mark Twain dined with us last night, in

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Duveneck was Mr. Boott's son-in-law. *Vide* page 153 *supra*.



company with the good Villari and the charming Mrs. Villari; but there was no chance then to ask him to sing Nora McCarty. He's a dear man, and there'll be a chance yet. He is in a delightful villa at Settignano, and says he has written more in the past four months than he could have done in two years at Hartford. Well! good-bye, dear old friend. Yours ever,

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry James.*

FLORENCE, Mar. 17, 1893.

. . . I don't wonder that it seems strange to you that we should be leaving here just in the glory of the year. *Your* view of Italy is that of the tourist; and that is really the only way to *enjoy* any place. Ours is that of the resident in whom the sweet decay breathed in for six months has produced a sort of physiological craving for a change to robuster air. One ends by craving one's own more permanent attitude, and a country whose language I can speak and where I can settle into my own necessary work (which has been awfully prevented here of late), without a guilty sense that I am neglecting the claims of pictures and monuments, is the better environment now. In short, Italy has well served its purpose by us and we shall be eternally grateful. But we have no farther use for it, and the spring is also beautiful in lands that will [be] fresher to our senses. There are moments when the Florentine debility becomes really hateful to one, and I don't see how the Loring and others can come and make their home with it. You have done the best thing, in putting yourself in the strongest *milieu* to be found on earth. But Italy is incomparable as a refreshing refuge, and I am sorry that you are likely to lose it this year. . . .

*To François Pillon.*

[Post-card]

LONDON, *June* 17, 1893.

You can hardly imagine how strong my disappointment was in losing you in Paris — when we might have found you by going to Alcan's on Monday, or by writing you before we came. It seems now sheer folly! But I did n't think of the possibility of your being gone so early in the summer. Our three young children are all in Switzerland, the older boy in Munich, and my wife and I are like middle-aged omnibus-horses let loose in a pasture. The first time we have had a holiday together for 15 years. I feel like a barrel without hoops! We shall be here in England for a month at least. After that everything is uncertain. I *may* not even pass through Paris again.

W. J.

*To Shadworth H. Hodgson.*

LONDON, *June* 23, 1893.

MY DEAR HODGSON,— I am more different kinds of an ass, or rather I am (without ceasing to be different kinds) the same kind more often than any other living man! This morning I knocked at your door, inwardly exultant with the certainty that I should find you, and learned that you had left for Saltburn just one hour ago! A week ago yesterday the same thing happened to me at Pillon's in Paris, and because of the same reason, my having announced my presence a day too late.

My wife and I have been here six days. As it was her first visit to England and she had a lot of clothes to get, having worn out her American supply in the past year, we thought we had better remain *incog.* for a week, drinking in London irresponsibly, and letting the dressmakers have

their will with her time. I early asked at your door whether you were in town and visible, and received a reassuring reply, so I felt quite safe and devoted myself to showing my wife the sights, and enjoying her naïf wonder as she drank in Britain's greatness. Four nights ago at 9:30 P.M. I pointed out to her (as possibly the climax of greatness) your library windows with one of them open and bright with the inner light. She said, "Let 's ring and see him." My heart palpitated to do so, but it was late and a hot night, and I was afraid you might be in tropical costume, safe for the night, and my hesitation lost us. We came home. It is too, too bad! I wanted much to see you, for though, my dear Hodgson, our correspondence has languished of late (the effect of encroaching eld), my sentiments to you-ward (as the apostle would say) are as lively as ever, and I recognize in you always the friend as well as the master. Are you likely to come back to London at all? Our plans did n't exactly lie through Yorkshire, but they are vague and may possibly be changed. But what I wanted my wife to see was S. H. H. in his own golden-hued library with the rumor of the cab-stand filling the air. . . . But write, you noble old philosopher and dear young man, to yours always,  
WM. JAMES.

*To Dickinson S. Miller.*

LONDON, *July 8, 1893.*

DARLING MILLER,—I must still for a while call you darling, in spite of your Toryism, ecclesiasticism, determinism, and general diabolism, which will probably result in your ruthlessly destroying me both as a man and as a philosopher some day. But sufficient unto that day will be its evil, so let me take advantage of the hours before "black-manhood comes" and still fondle you for a while

upon my knee. And both you and Angell, being now colleagues and not students, had better stop Mistering or Professoring me, or I shall retaliate by beginning to "Mr." and "Prof." you. . . .

What you say of Erdmann, Uphues and the atmosphere of German academic life generally, is exceedingly interesting. If we can only keep our own humaner tone in spite of the growing complication of interests! I think we shall in great measure, for there is nothing here in English academic circles that corresponds to the German savagery. I do hope we may meet in Switzerland shortly, and you can then tell me what Erdmann's greatness consists in. . . .

I have done hardly any reading since the beginning of March. My genius for being frustrated and interrupted, and our unsettled mode of life have played too well into each other's hands. The consequence is that I rather long for settlement, and the resumption of the harness. If I only had working strength not to require these abominably costly vacations! Make the most of these days, my dear Miller. They will never exactly return, and will be looked back to by you hereafter as quite ideal. I am glad you have assimilated the German opportunities so well. Both Hodder and Angell have spoken with admiration of the methodical way in which you have forged ahead. It is a pity you have not had a chance at England, with which land you seem to have so many inward affinities. If you are to come here let me know, and I can give you introductions. Hodgson is in Yorkshire and I've missed him. Myers sails for the Chicago Psychic Congress, Aug. 2nd. Sidgwick may still be had, perhaps, and Bryce, who will give you an order to the Strangers' Gallery. The House of Commons, cradle of all free institutions, is really a wonderful and moving sight, and at bottom here the people are more good-natured

on the Irish question than one would think to listen to their strong words. The cheery, active English temperament beats the world, I believe, the *Deutschers* included. But so cartilaginous and unsentimental as to the *Gemüth*! The girls like boys and the men like horses!

I shall be greatly interested in your article. As for Uphues, I am duly uplifted that such a man should read me, and am ashamed to say that amongst my pile of sins is that of having carried about two of his books with me for three or four years past, always meaning to read, and never actually reading them. I only laid them out again yesterday to take back to Switzerland with me. Such things make me despair. Paulsen's *Einleitung* is the greatest treat I have enjoyed of late. His synthesis is to my mind almost lamentably unsatisfactory, but the book makes a station, an *étape*, in the expression of things. Good-bye — my wife comes in, ready to go out to lunch, and thereafter to Haslemere for the night. She sends love, and so do I. Address us when you get to Switzerland to M. Cérésolle, as above, "la Chiesaz sur Vevey (Vaud), and believe me ever yours,

WM. JAMES.

*To Henry James.*

THE SALTERS' HILL-TOP  
[near CHOCORUA], Sept. 22, 1893.

. . . I am up here for a few days with Billy, to close our house for the winter, and get a sniff of the place. The Salters have a noble hill with such an outlook! and a very decent little house and barn. But oh! the difference from Switzerland, the thin grass and ragged waysides, the poverty-stricken land, and sad American sunlight over all — sad because so empty. There is a strange thinness and fem-

inity hovering over all America, so different from the stoutness and masculinity of land and air and everything in Switzerland and England, that the coming back makes one feel strangely sad and hardens one in the resolution never to go away again unless one can go to end one's days. Such a divided soul is very bad. To you, who now have real practical relations and a place in the old world, I should think there was no necessity of ever coming back again. But Europe has been made what it is by men staying in their homes and fighting stubbornly generation after generation for all the beauty, comfort and order that they have got — we must abide and do the same.<sup>1</sup> As England struck me newly and differently last time, so America now — force and directness in the people, but a terrible grimness, more ugliness than I ever realized in things, and a greater weakness in nature's beauty, such as it is. One must pitch one's whole sensibility first in a different key — then gradually the quantum of personal happiness of which one is susceptible fills the cup — but the moment of change of key is lonesome. . . .

We had the great Helmholtz and his wife with us one afternoon, gave them tea and invited some people to meet them; she, a charming woman of the world, brought up by her aunt, Madame Mohl, in Paris; he the most monumental example of benign calm and speechlessness that I ever saw. He is growing old, and somewhat weary, I think, and makes no effort beyond that of smiling and inclining his head to remarks that are made. At least he made no response to remarks of mine; but Royce, Charles Norton, John Fiske, and Dr. Walcott, who surrounded

<sup>1</sup> Jan. 24, '94. To Carl Stumpf. "One should not be a cosmopolitan, one's soul becomes 'disintegrated,' as Janet would say. Parts of it remain in different places, and the whole of it is nowhere. One's native land seems foreign. It is not wholly a good thing, and I think I suffer from it."

him at a little table where he sat with tea and beer, said that he spoke. Such power of calm is a great possession.

I have been twice to Mrs. Whitman's, once to a lunch and reception to the Bourgets a fortnight ago. Mrs. G——, it would seem, has kept them like caged birds (probably because they wanted it so); Mrs. B. was charming and easy, he ill at ease, refusing to try English unless compelled, and turning to *me* at the table as a drowning man to a "hencoop," as if there were safety in the presence of anyone connected with you. I could do nothing towards inviting them, in the existent state of our ménage; but when, later, they come back for a month in Boston, I shall be glad to bring them into the house for a few days. I feel quite a fellow feeling for him; he seems a very human creature, and it was a real pleasure to me to see a Frenchman of B.'s celebrity *look* as ill at ease as I myself have often *felt* in fashionable society. They are, I believe, in Canada, and have only too much society.

I shan't go to Chicago, for economy's sake — besides I *must* get to work. But *everyone* says one ought to sell all one has and mortgage one's soul to go there; it is esteemed such a revelation of beauty. People cast away all sin and baseness, burst into tears and grow religious, etc., under the influence!! *Some* people evidently. . . .

The people about home are very pleasant to meet. . . .  
Yours ever affectionately,

WM. JAMES.





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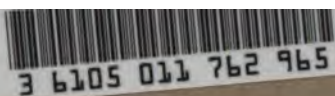
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